

ON A COLLISION COURSE:
COMPLEMENTARIANISM AND THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN

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In memory of my mother,
Hildagard Jordan Cochran,
a true ezer-warrior

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ABSTRACT

Many Christian women are in churches where their roles are restricted due to the fact that they are women. This is keeping women from recognizing and fulfilling their true potential as human beings made in the image of God. Their Creator has given them spiritual gifts which they are not allowed to exercise nor utilize for the benefit of the body of Christ. In such a case, the woman's use of her gift is stifled and the church body is at a disadvantage because it is not benefitting from her gifts. This view of the woman can affect her negatively in the following dimensions: spiritually, sociologically and psychologically. For all of these reasons, there is a need to show these women their true and full potential as women made in the image of God and endowed with spiritual gifts.

Therefore, a project was created to show Christian women new perspectives on key passages about females in Scripture. A Power Point presentation was the teaching tool and it was divided into five parts: 1) The Creation Narrative, 2) Women in the Old Testament, 3) Jesus and the Gospels, 4) Women in the New Testament, and 5) Kingdom Building. The writer presented this material to ten women one morning, and engaged them in a time of questions and discussions throughout their time together.

The writer's hypothesis was that complementarianism might contribute to an identity of inferiority in the Christian woman. Therefore, in teaching these egalitarian perspectives of Scripture, she was searching for evidence that this new information would perhaps strengthen a woman's concept of self, thereby improving her identity.

CHAPTER 1

COMPLEMENTARIANISM MAY CONTRIBUTE TO AN IDENTITY OF INFERIORITY IN THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN

A Christian woman may be in a church where she finds her roles restricted due to the fact that she is a woman. This keeps her from recognizing and fulfilling her true potential as a human being made in the image of God. Her Creator has given her spiritual gifts which she is not permitted to exercise for the benefit of the body of Christ. In such a case, the woman's use of her spiritual gifts is stifled and the church body is at a disadvantage because it is not benefitting from her gifts.

There are other repercussions of this view: the woman may not take full responsibility for her sins, for her spiritual maturity, nor for her depth of faith, knowledge, or Scriptural study and usage. She might believe these areas are best left to the husband, or another man in "authority" in her life.

Furthermore, there is a possible connection between a complementarian (or hierarchical) view and the acceptance of wife abuse.¹ This is due to the belief that the wife is inferior to her husband and must submit to him in all things, including physical abuse. This is a travesty because the woman's mental and physical health may be in danger due to the practical consequences of belief in complementarianism.

This view of the woman can affect her in other areas of life, especially spiritually, sociologically and psychologically. When a church restricts the practice of her spiritual gifts, considers her inferior to the man, and places her in a submissive role, her well-

¹ Leslie Postovoit, "The Attitudes Toward Christian Women Scale (ACWS): Initial Efforts Towards the Development of an Instrument Measuring Patriarchal Beliefs," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 9, no. 2 (1990): 65.

being is endangered. For all these reasons, there is a need to bring freedom to this woman by allowing her to reveal her true and full potential as a woman made in the image of God, endowed with spiritual gifts, talents and an important perspective.

These observations have led to the following hypothesis: Complementarianism may contribute to an identity of inferiority in the Christian woman. It can affect her negatively in many ways. This study looks at the effects of complementarianism in three areas of the Christian woman's life: the spiritual, sociological and psychological. Although these aspects intertwine and overlap, there will be a focus on each one in order. For these dimensions of her life, her identity of inferiority will be described by her self-concept and will address such aspects of identity as her sense of value or worth, intellect, voice and behavior. Thus, the study will include how she thinks of herself and what she says and does in these arenas, or dimensions, of her life.

This chapter has the following structure: The three main sections are Defining the Terms, Describing the Problem, and Depicting the Urgency. The three dimensions of the woman's life: spiritual, sociological and psychological will be covered in the section called Describing the Problem.

Defining the Terms

Complementarianism is the belief that men and women carry out different roles in the church, determined by biological sex rather than by spiritual gift, experience or talent. This theological position has also been called "traditional," "patriarchal" and "hierarchical" and these terms may be used interchangeably throughout this study. However, Piper and Grudem state:

If one word must be used to describe our position, we prefer the term complementarian, since it suggests both equality and beneficial differences between men and women. We are uncomfortable with the term “traditionalist” because it implies an unwillingness to let Scripture challenge traditional patterns of behavior, and we certainly reject the term “hierarchicalist” because it overemphasizes structured authority while giving no suggestion of equality or the beauty of mutual interdependence.²

A Christian woman is defined as a woman who has decided to follow Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior. She describes herself as someone who has made a profession of faith in the Christ of the New Testament, accepting and acknowledging her own sinfulness, putting her trust in Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross in her place, and thereby receiving salvation and the assurance of eternal life as reward for the forgiveness of her sins.

As this study addresses the identity of the Christian woman in three overlapping areas of her life, they will be addressed thus: The spiritual dimension will include those areas affecting her faith, including her theology and the interpretation of Scripture. This dimension also includes her local church body (in which she considers herself a member) and the larger ecclesial institution or the denomination with which she associates. Another way to describe the parameters of this dimension is to say it is the Christian woman’s concept of self relative to God and spiritual matters.

The sociological dimension includes the relational aspects of her life: individual relationships, family, friends, church, work, or any community or organization in which

² John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), 11.

she is a participant. Another way to delineate the sociological dimension is to show the woman's concept of self relative to others and the groups with which she associates.

Finally, the psychological dimension will also cover her emotions and sense of worth, or self-esteem, but in the perspective of who she perceives herself to be and how she relates to herself. This area will focus more on how she reflects back on herself the identity of inferiority and how she handles emotionally her self-esteem or lack thereof. "According to James (1890), self-esteem is the ratio of one's success to one's pretensions."³ For the purposes of this paper, low self-concept will be equated with low self-esteem, which contributes to an identity of inferiority. Therefore, this dimension will include the Christian woman's thoughts, words and actions relative to self.

Throughout the paper, the following terms may be used accordingly: A woman's identity is who she perceives herself to be and her intellect refers to the mental capacity of her mind. Her voice refers to the capacity to express her own opinion and her behavior is simply what she does or how she fulfills (or fails to fulfill) a particular role.

Describing the Problem

As stated above, this study investigates the hypothesis that complementarianism contributes to an identity of inferiority in the Christian woman. Her identity will be explored by looking at the Christian woman's thoughts, words and actions through three dimensions: spiritual, sociological and psychological. Although these dimensions (or

³ W. James, *Principles of Psychology*, (New York: Holt, 1890), quoted in Robert A. Josephs, Hazel Rose Markus, and Romin W. Tafari, "Gender and Self-Esteem," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 63, no. 3 (1992): 392.

aspects) of her life intersect, with repeating themes, each one will be studied separately and in order.

The Spiritual Dimension

The Christian woman's concept of self relative to God and spiritual matters is explored here, focusing on her thoughts, her words, and her actions in turn. In the spiritual dimension, complementarianism may give the Christian woman cause to believe she has been created as a subordinate to the man, that her perspective is not needed in church or other ecclesial settings, and that her spiritual roles are limited.

Christians look to Genesis chapters 1 through 3 for the explanation of origins of the human race. The complementarian interpretation of the creation account may contribute to an identity of inferiority in the Christian woman. Note the experience of author Peggy Reeves Sanday:

We have little information on how boys and girls are affected by prevailing religious symbols. My experience in observing my son and daughter has been instructive. Upon reading the biblical passage "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27), my son exclaimed: "How could God have created a female in his own image if God was male?...Obviously, God must have been part female in order to have created male and female in his own image," my son declared.⁴

However, complementarians emphasize that Adam was created first and Eve was created from Adam. In this view, because Adam appeared on the scene first, the man carries the leading role and the woman has the subordinate one. She is restricted from teaching Scripture or holding an authoritative role over a man because it is the

⁴ Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, rpt. 1988), 215-216.

man who carries out the role of “head.” In referring to the creation account in Scripture from Genesis chapters 1-3, one complementarian puts it this way, “How may we understand the logic of God’s decision to describe the human race as ‘man’? Let me suggest that it makes sense against the backdrop of male headship.”⁵ In other words, Eve’s creation is swallowed up in the creation of Adam (man), and this can lead a woman to develop an identity of inferiority.

W. E. Best agrees with this interpretation of Adam as head, thereby making Eve subordinate. Even though Best often refers to marriage, he alternates terms between husband/wife and man/woman, and it is difficult to separate his interpretation of the subordination of the wife to the husband from the subordination of the woman to the man (universal). Note his argument regarding the creation account of Eve (Genesis 2:21-22):

Human nature was created in Adam. Then God formed or built woman out of man; thus, woman is a part of man. She was made for inseparable union and fellowship of life with man. The manner of her creation laid the foundation for the moral ordinance of marriage for all time. The woman must be dependent on the man, not the man on the woman.⁶

Not only is the woman’s self-concept influenced by this teaching of subordination, but so is her freedom to express herself. Her voice may not be welcome in complementarian settings: “Eve’s mistake was being insubordinate to her husband,

⁵ Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., “Chapter 3: Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, eds. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Good News Publishers, 1991), 98.

⁶ W. E. Best, *Woman – Man’s Completion* (Houston: South Belt Assembly of Christ, 1966), 6.

and Adam's mistake was listening to Eve rather than God." ⁷ In some cases, she must be silent in worship:

Eve was the occasion of man's fall. She was deceived and in the transgression. Woman is not to publicly pray or teach. Prophesying, with respect to women (I Corinthians 11:5), means joining in public worship in silent prayer, hearing the word, and singing praises to God with the men. Singing is sometimes called prophesying.⁸

Furthermore, her spiritual roles as a woman are limited due to the interpretations of this and certain other Scripture passages. She should be dependent, secondary and submissive, according to W. E. Best: "All were to be derived from Adam; therefore, woman must not have an independent but a derived existence from Adam, the natural head of the human race... She has a secondary and dependent place... Since woman was taken from man, she owes him honor and submission."⁹

In some complementarian settings, the Christian woman has been told that her highest calling is to honor and submit to her husband in the home. Once again, W. E. Best expresses well this traditional view of the wife:

"Woman's place is not one of inferiority but of dependence on her husband. One who is helpmate, counterpart, and completion of man is not considered inferior. Inferiority and superiority have no place when speaking of man and woman. Woman is given to man for his good in an attitude of submissiveness. Her chief glory is the exercise of her God-given power as wife and mother. The woman's place is in the home. She emits not her perfume except in the shade of her home. (See Prov. 31.) Her sphere there is unnoticed by the world."¹⁰

⁷ Best, *Woman – Man's Completion*, 12.

⁸ Best, *Woman – Man's Completion*, 110. (Best is referring to I Timothy 2:11-14.)

⁹ Best, *Woman – Man's Completion*, 6-7.

¹⁰ Best, *Woman – Man's Completion*, 8.

Not only must this Christian wife stay in the home and submit to her husband, but she must also remember her subordinate role in the church: "Woman in Christ is spiritually equal with man in Christ. Difference in sexes is irrelevant in redemption, but diversity remains in church polity and worship. The Creator has not equipped women for positions of authority in the churches."¹¹ Best explains that this role will bring her peace: "The Lord wills that woman manifest her subordination to man. If she is not allowed to exercise authority in the home, surely she cannot do so in the church. She is not inferior but subordinate. Subordination brings great peace of mind, resulting from knowing and doing the will of God."¹²

Unfortunately, W. E. Best claims that the way for a Christian woman to find fulfillment is to find a husband and to accept her subordinate role, her silenced voice, and her submissive attitude in the church and at home. Satisfaction in Christ found in other ways or as a single or career woman is inadmissible. "If woman dreads living alone, it is because her life is without an aim unless she can be a helpmate."¹³ This sums up the problem of the spiritual dimension for the Christian woman living in complementarianism.

The Sociological Dimension

Exploring the Christian woman's life in relationship and group settings will form

¹¹ Best, *Woman – Man's Completion*, 105. (Best is referring to Galatians 3:28).

¹² Best, *Woman – Man's Completion*, 114.

¹³ Best, *Woman – Man's Completion*, 9.

the sociological dimension. First, observations will be made about her self-concept in regard to relationships, then the measure of confidence in expressing herself verbally, and finally, her behavior in these relational or group dynamics. Each will be observed through the lens of complementarianism.

The patriarchal church mirrors the culture in that it elevates the status of a man over a woman. Psychologists in one study have noted “a masculine bias in American culture.”¹⁴ Since male is seen as primary, female is secondary, or “other,” as noted by Simone de Beauvoir. “Thus whatever makes a woman different from a man also makes her inferior to him.”¹⁵ Even in the United States labor force today, a man is considered more valuable economically than a woman, thus reinforcing the idea that a man is worth more than a woman.¹⁶ Therefore, all of these factors could lead to low self-esteem in a woman.

Regarding a woman’s verbal expression, her concern about relationships may prevent her from voicing her opinions. One study has shown that a woman’s sensitivity towards others’ opinions affects her own sense of worth.¹⁷ Thus, she may choose not to

¹⁴ Jeffery W. Burnett., Wayne P. Anderson, and P. Paul Heppner, “Gender Roles and Self-Esteem: A Consideration of Environmental Factors,” *Journal of Counseling and Development* 73 (January / February 1995): 326.

¹⁵ Nancy Marie Patterson Tischler, *A Voice of Her Own: Women, Literature, and Transformation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Dallas: Probe Books, 1987), 115.

¹⁶ Jennifer L. Petersen and Janet Shibley Hyde, “A Meta-Analytic Review of Research on Gender Differences in Sexuality, 1993-2007,” *Psychological Bulletin* 136, no. 1 (2007): 21–38.

¹⁷ Susan E. Cross and Laura Madson, “Models of the Self: Self-Construals and Gender,” *Psychological Bulletin* 122, no. 1 (July 1997): 5-37.

speak up in a congregational meeting, for instance, when her perspective could actually be very helpful.

In addition, the woman may re-think her own opinion and conclude that it is not valid, preferring to keep peace and support the male opinion. One author notes the reasons women may exhibit an identity of inferiority:

But we can safely claim that there are two special aspects to women's identity. The first is their fundamental concern with the network of relationships. The second is the tendency to subscribe to public masculine values to an extent which makes it hard for them to evaluate their own needs and strengths. Even the strongest of us still has one foot in the patriarchal system whether we know it or not.¹⁸

This author also points out why women may re-evaluate their ideas and choose to keep silent: "Women come to question the normality of their feelings and to alter their judgments in deference to the opinion of others."¹⁹ The masculine way of doing things is seen as strong, and therefore admirable, while their own tendency to prize caring and empathy is devalued as weak."²⁰ So the Christian woman in a patriarchal setting may choose to stay quiet out of fear of damaging a relationship or also to appear spiritual and obedient to the biblical mandate, as she understands it.

Another author explains how a woman can lose her voice in a relationship with a man, which perhaps is similar to the image of a woman trying to find her way in an organization such as the church within Western society: "Voice is an indicator of self.

¹⁸ Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse, *A Woman's Identity* (Cleveland, SC: Bonne Chance Press, 1994), 33.

¹⁹ Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1982), quoted in Barnhouse, *A Woman's Identity*, 32.

²⁰ Barnhouse, *A Woman's Identity*, 32.

Speaking of one's feelings and thoughts is part of creating, maintaining, and recreating one's authentic self."²¹ Thus, in a complementarian church setting, where the patriarchal voice is dominant, the woman loses not only her voice, but her "self."

Even more serious, a battered wife may believe that she is supposed to stay with her abusive husband, submitting to him in physical abuse, in passive obedience to God and her marital vows. "Research also suggests that women who have been subjected to a higher degree of patriarchal socialization patterns are more likely to have low self-esteem, to become targets of spousal abuse, and to have the most difficulty escaping the victimization of being a battered woman."²² She stays although her well-being is in danger and she allows him to do the thinking and to make decisions for her. "Women in battering relationships also are more likely to have adopted the patriarchal Christian woman's practice of deferring decision-making to men."²³ This pattern of silent submission to the man is extremely damaging to the woman's self-concept.

As to the actions of the Christian woman, there may be internal pressure to act according to the ideal of feminine goodness. Portraying the silent martyr may be the

²¹ Dana Crowley Jack, *Silencing the Self: Women and Depression* (NY, NY: Harper Perennial, William Morrow Paperbacks, 1993), 32.

²² J. T. Spence, "Ratings of self and peers on sex-role attributes and their relation to self-esteem and conceptions of masculinity and femininity," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 34 (1975): 29-39; L.E. Walker "Battered women and learned helplessness," *Victimology: An International Journal* 2, no. 4 (1977-78): 525-534; L. Wetzell and M.A. Ross. "Psychological and social ramifications of battering: Observations leading to a counseling methodology for victims of domestic violence," *Personnel and Guidance Journal* 6, no. 7 (1983): 423-428; quoted in Leslie Postovoi, "The Attitudes Toward Christian Women Scale (ACWS): Initial Efforts Towards the Development of an Instrument Measuring Patriarchal Beliefs," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 9, no. 2 (1990): 66.

²³ Postovoi, "The Attitudes," 66.

noble image in this woman's mind. Thus, a woman wishing to obey God may choose to be passive and quiet in order to preserve an appearance of godliness:

The cultural definition of feminine goodness as selfless giving in relationship moves in to restrict and to channel the authentic wish to love and care, and provides a stereotypic conception of the way to do it. This image of goodness as selfless love joins with the deep desire to make and maintain relationships to create a powerful obstacle to self-expression and recognition of anger.²⁴

Therefore, this Christian woman does not think she is as worthy as the man sitting in the church pew next to her, she has chosen to silence her own voice in order to conform, and she chooses not to put herself forward in roles where her gifting or experience would be valuable. In such a complementarian setting, she believes the man in authority knows better. "Silent women have little awareness of their intellectual capabilities. They live – selfless and voiceless – at the behest of those around them. External authorities know the truth and are all-powerful."²⁵ Or, in other words, "Where language and naming are power, silence is oppression, is violence."²⁶

In sum, in the sociological dimension, where the Christian woman is dealing with relationships, organizational structure and group dynamics, she typically thinks she is not as intelligent or valuable as others, that her ideas are not worth expressing and that her work is not as valued as a man's.

²⁴ Jack, *Silencing the Self*, 110.

²⁵ Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger and Jill Mattuck Tarule *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 134.

²⁶ Adrienne Rich, 1977, quoted in Belenky, et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 23.

The Psychological Dimension

Observing the Christian woman's identity and concept of self relative to her own person is the focus of the psychological dimension. Her thoughts, emotions, words used to describe herself, and her behavior will be noted. The psychological dimension colors all aspects of her life. As said before, these three dimensions intertwine and overlap, but the psychological is at the core of her being.

From the beginning of her conscious life, as soon as the girl-child understands her biological sex, there is the opportunity to develop an inferiority complex. She not only learns that she is a girl, but with that she acquires the knowledge that being female means being secondary or "other." Furthermore, in complementarian circles, she is taught that her Creator is male, which adds to the feeling of being left out or less important than the man, who is made in God's image. Note how one author expresses it: "The damage done to women's self-esteem by the belief that only man is created in God's image is incalculable. Every male is instantly, fundamentally affirmed by the belief that God is male, and also by the patriarchal practices that follow from it. By contrast, every female is negated."²⁷

The girl-child or Christian woman also learns that the female perspective is missing in many realms of life. Patriarchy in the culture is also to blame, as Dianna Moore has pointed out: "The problem for women is that patriarchal culture has included only half of the interpretative total image of the universe, the half from a male

²⁷ Linda Tschirhart Sanford and Mary Ellen Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem* (1984; repr., NY, NY: Penguin Books, 1986), 165.

perspective.”²⁸ She explains how women have come to accept the hierarchy due to religious beliefs: “In the patriarchal ‘moral’ order, the subordination of women is viewed as ‘natural’ and ‘right.’”²⁹ Moore also notes how that affects the condition of low self-esteem:

When we hear a woman speak in therapy about her low self-esteem, her sense of inadequacy or inferiority, her general feelings of incompleteness and emptiness, we know that she is talking about something inextricably bound up with her early gender identity – her internal experience of being a woman in a patriarchal culture. From the time she was born, she had an assigned place and role in the family and in the world based largely upon the fact that she was female. She learned that certain things were predetermined as feminine and certain things were defined as masculine and that there were different expectations for males and females. She learned that those things defined as feminine were valued less than those things defined as masculine.³⁰

These issues, along with other societal factors, can contribute to the sense of inferiority in the woman’s identity. If American society favors the man over the woman, the patriarchal church only serves to reinforce this identity of inferiority.

Not only is this interpretation of the creation passage a reason for the woman to feel inferior, but the biblical account of how sin entered the world may be as well. The church may teach that the first woman Eve is responsible for humanity’s fall into sin in the Garden of Eden. The Christian woman may learn that Eve was deceived by Satan, fell into disobedience, and is therefore responsible for allowing sin into the world. In some

²⁸ Dianna Moore, “An Experiential Group Design to Explore the Impact of Patriarchal Culture and Religion on Women’s Faith Development and God Images and to Facilitate Composition of Women’s Unique Images of Themselves and Ultimate Meaning,” (D. Min. Thesis Project, Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, 1988), 24.

²⁹ Moore, “An Experiential Group Design,” 25.

³⁰ Moore, “An Experiential Group Design,” 30-31.

complementarian environments, Eve is continually blamed for her gullibility in believing the serpent and is vilified as the one at fault for allowing the garden of Paradise to be contaminated. Since Eve is the original woman, she is therefore the ancestor of every woman and girl, and in certain church settings, this implies guilt by association. Every woman is therefore to blame and should be punished for Eve's original sin.

The woman who hears this teaching and absorbs the imbalanced emphasis on Eve's culpability may carry the weight of inferiority in her own self-concept. She may even choose (psychologically) to carry the guilt for her male counterpart, prizing it as a badge of honor because she possesses that "special biblical knowledge." This, however, contributes to the low self-concept:

...perhaps the belief of patriarchal religions that is most damaging to women's self-esteem is the belief that woman, through Eve the temptress, brought evil into the world and thus is responsible for "the fall of man" and his banishment from the garden of Eden. According to both Judaism and Christianity, woman is the earthly embodiment of evil, as Tertullian, an influential early orthodox Christian thinker, did not want anyone to forget: "God's sentence hangs still over your sex and His punishment weights down upon you. You are the devil's gateway; you are she who first violated the forbidden tree and broke the law of God. It was you coaxed your way around him whom the devil had not the force to attack. With what ease you shattered that image of God: man! Because of the death you merited, the Son of God had to die."³¹

In addition to the above biblical interpretations which may contribute to an identity of inferiority, there are other doctrines which may affect the Christian woman in a negative way psychologically. Some Christians promote teachings by John Calvin, which may lead to utter self-abnegation. These teachings may be beneficial and biblical,

³¹ Tertullian, quoted in O'Faolain and Martines, *Not in God's Image*, 132, quoted in Sanford and Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem*, 165-166.

but can be pushed to such an extreme that one is left feeling like nothing less than a worm. Here are some examples:

That person has profited well in the knowledge of himself when he is crushed and frightened by understanding his wretchedness, poverty, nakedness, and disgrace. For there is no danger that a person will lower himself too much, provided he understands that he must recover in God what he lacks in himself.
— John Calvin³²

“We must willingly reduce ourselves to nothing, so that Christ may fill the entire World with His rays...” [Comm. on Matt. 23:12.]... “...Only humility elevates us and makes us noble.” [Comm. on Matt. 18:4.] ... For “the man who knows himself, has little self-esteem – the realization of his own sin gives him a tolerance and a love of others.” [Inst. III: 3:16]³³

To the already humble and teachable Christian woman who wants to please God and strive toward godliness, an exaggerated emphasis on Calvin’s teachings on humility may leave her empty and frail emotionally. If God’s love and unconditional acceptance are not also taught alongside the doctrine of total depravity, she may very well experience a lack of fortitude and a low spirit, eventually leading to more serious issues.

Not only do these perspectives add to a woman’s feelings of inferiority, they will also influence what she says about herself. She may suffer from such an identity crisis that she does not know how to describe herself. In one study, the women struggled to find words to describe a “self” they were not even sure was there. “‘Shot full of holes,’

³² Acidri, “What Would Calvin Say on Today’s Self Esteem Movement?” A Twisted Crown of Thorns (November 2, 2012), accessed July 26, 2014, <http://atwistedcrownofthorns.com/2012/11/02/what-would-calvin-say-on-todays-self-esteem-movement/>.

³³ Francis Nigel Lee, “John Calvin – True Presbyterian,” (Inaugural Lecture, Queensland Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Emmanuel College, St. Lucia, Australia, 1981, updated Nov. 2003), accessed July 26, 2014, <http://www.dr-fnlee.org/docs4/jctp/jctp.pdf>, 4.

‘full of gaps,’ ‘a big blank’ – these are phrases with which women described themselves.”³⁴ Or she may readily conjure up a barrage of insults for herself, perhaps thinking such verbal self-flagellation is appropriate and godly behavior for the descendant of the one who ushered sin into the world. So, the Christian woman may engage in negative self-talk, believing it to be a biblical antidote to sinful pride:

In the mind of someone with low self-esteem, powerful negative statements about the self or equally powerful and negative visual images often run constantly... Self-punishment is the primary function...Any woman can very effectively make herself miserable with them. She becomes a name-calling, self-denigrating self-scourge, always ready to dash any hope of enjoyment or peace of mind.³⁵

Nor is the woman allowed to express her emotions freely, in a male-dominated Christian culture, for fear of appearing immature and childish. If not permitted to express her emotions, she will intellectualize them or suppress them, causing other problems later.³⁶ Unfortunately, this prohibition of showing emotion coincides with the lack of respect for oneself:

One of the most distinctive and unfortunate characteristics of our culture is the strong bias against emotions that runs through it. In order to have self-esteem a person needs to be able to accept that she is emotional, to say to herself, “I am a feeling being, and that’s okay”...Given the anti-emotion bias of our culture, it is no wonder that one of the most common ways a woman’s lack of respect for herself is expressed is through lack of respect for her emotions. Many women believe emotions are unseemly, silly, signs of weakness or otherwise bad. Many also look down upon emotions and any expression of them as embarrassing, undignified and immature.³⁷

³⁴ Sanford and Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem*, 12.

³⁵ Sanford and Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem*, 294-295.

³⁶ Sanford and Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem*, 358-359.

³⁷ Sanford and Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem*, 353-354.

Not only does the complementarian perspective contribute to the Christian woman's diminished self-concept and derogatory self-talk, but it also negatively influences her behavior. She may choose several paths of behavior in response to the oppression of patriarchal philosophy and practices. This woman may struggle in the fight against an identity of inferiority in a number of ways, including: romance, raising children, perfectionism, and finally escape, which could be escape through substance abuse, withdrawal into self-pity and depression or even suicide.

First of all, romance, or finding a mate, is an acceptable avenue for the Christian woman and she may pursue this to find her value. Since men rule and have the dominant voice in the complementarian church setting, a married woman may be allowed some input into certain ecclesial issues privately through her husband. But the single woman in church finds herself left out and without a voice. In the search to find value and a voice, she may begin to long for a mate, thinking he will provide the missing piece.

This need to find a husband for completion is not only what the church teaches, but is promoted in the world as well:

Females in particular are raised to be in love with love. Over and over again from the earliest age, girls and women are told that "you're nobody until somebody loves you," and eventually the insidious message sinks in and the search for that one special somebody begins. But according to the rules of our culture, the love of just any somebody won't do to make a girl or woman whole and worthy. No, only the love of a man or boy can make a female person worthy and whole: She is nobody until somebody *male* loves her.³⁸

³⁸ Sanford and Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem*, 330.

However, if it is not in God's plan for this woman to marry, she carries on through adulthood feeling she has little or no value as a single woman in the hierarchical church.

A second avenue the Christian woman may take in order to find worth is through raising children. This is also seen as an acceptable and godly ideal in most ecclesial settings. The problem lies in the false notion that this is the only way to gain self-worth as a woman. Or worse, she will see her children's choices and behavior as a reflection of her own value as a person. "A woman who searches in this way looks to her children to make her worthy and whole, and typically judges herself a failure or success as a human being according to whether she has been a success or failure as a mother."³⁹

Furthermore, a woman raises children for only so many years, and then the task is finished, leaving her with a new struggle to achieve a sense of self-worth.

Thirdly, another avenue a woman may take is the goal of being perfect. In an attempt to gain a higher standing in the eyes of others, she may battle with perfectionism. Nothing is good enough; she must keep trying, or she may see the futility of the fight and simply become paralyzed by the desire for perfection. She may reach that "all-or-nothing" place and still find herself lacking in self-esteem.⁴⁰

Finally, in battling the contrary psychological influence of the hierarchical church, the Christian woman may decide to escape the problem of inferiority rather than fight it. She may attempt to numb the pain through substance abuse such as drugs or alcohol.

³⁹ Sanford and Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem*, 338.

⁴⁰ Sanford and Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem*, 307.

Other methods of escape include withdrawal into self-pity, which may result in depression, and could ultimately lead to suicide:

And, of course, the painful part of withdrawing is the self-pity which almost always accompanies it. Intense personal sorrow is a constant companion of this life style, bringing with it those destructive little comments spoken in the inner chambers of the mind: "I knew you'd blow it," and "You never do anything right," and "Wouldn't you know it would happen to me," and "Why!? Why!? Why!?" ...Self-pity is both addictive and highly contagious. It spreads like wildfire within a family, neighborhood, or church congregation. It is also exhausting, leaving its victims unmotivated, tired, bored, and miserable. And more and more commonly, this form of despair among women leads to the ultimate in personal hatred, suicide itself.⁴¹

Thus complementarianism can contribute to the Christian woman's identity of inferiority. This type of ecclesial environment affects her self-concept in the spiritual, sociological and psychological dimensions. Her thoughts, words and actions are influenced in such a way as to tear down her self-esteem, which leads to other serious issues in the woman's life.

Depicting the Urgency

Everyone has a concept of self, whether it be positive or negative. And everyone has some sense of self-worth, be it miniscule or grandiose. Some amount of self-esteem is absolutely essential to be successful in this world, and most human beings struggle to maintain a healthy dose of self-esteem as they walk through the trials and tribulations of life. Unfortunately, the Christian woman in the complementarian setting may have more significant challenges as she searches for her true worth as a woman.

⁴¹ James C. Dobson, *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1981), 32-33.

The Christian woman's battle against an identity of inferiority in the hierarchical church setting is a very important one. These oppressive forces in the restrictive environment continually chip away at the self-esteem of the Christian woman in their midst. The negative influences of patriarchy contribute to her inferiority complex. Because the psychological dimension represents the core of her being, it colors all the others and makes an impact on every other aspect of her life:

We need self-esteem because nothing is as important to psychological well-being. Our level of self-esteem affects virtually everything we think, say and do. It affects how we see the world and our place in it. It affects how others in the world see and treat us. It affects the choices we make--choices about what we will do with our lives and with whom we will be involved. It affects our ability to both give and receive love.⁴²

Not only will her low self-esteem darken her view of self now, but it may also determine her future: "In classes on literature we are taught that 'character determines action.' I would paraphrase that to say self-concept determines destiny. Or to speak with greater restraint and precision, there is a strong tendency for self-concept to determine destiny."⁴³ Certainly her feelings of inferiority will close in on her, constricting her choices and dampening her desires.

Those who rule in the patriarchal churches believe they have truth on their side as they continue to keep the woman in her silent, submissive role. In this complementarian sub-culture, it is believed that restrictive roles for a woman are

⁴² Sanford and Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem*, 3.

⁴³ Nathaniel Branden, *The Psychology of Romantic Love*, quoted in Sanford and Donovan, *Women and Self Esteem*, 407.

universal truths. The controlled interpretation of a few biblical verses determines the structure for everyone in the world. As is noted, "Each culture, sometimes each sub-culture, tends to view its own customs as a concrete manifestation of an obvious eternal truth about the sexes."⁴⁴ Thus, the woman who is a "received knower"⁴⁵ will be reluctant to object to what is being taught as God's eternal truth.

In fact, the Christian woman is capable of much, much more than she has been allowed to demonstrate in the complementarian environment. Due to the damage done to her self-concept, she typically believes only the men are gifted and talented enough for leadership and other spiritual roles. "The net effect of the combination of patriarchy and our stereotypes is that men overestimate themselves, while women underestimate themselves. Their natural qualities have been disparaged, and their best talents given inferior labels."⁴⁶

A voice from within the camp of hierarchy has also noted the extreme oppressive environment which this type of theology produces. Jay Adams has observed, "...there is a leash placed upon women in Reformed church life that is unbiblical and spiritually stifling for the Body and Reformed feminine spirituality."⁴⁷ Limitation of the

⁴⁴ Barnhouse, *A Woman's Identity*, 39.

⁴⁵ Mary Field Belenky, et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986). Received knowers think they can learn only from others in authority; they do not believe they are capable of learning independently or thinking original thoughts.

⁴⁶ Barnhouse, *A Woman's Identity*, 50.

⁴⁷ Jay Adams, *Shepherding God's Flock: The Pastoral Life* (repr.; 1974 Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975), 102, quoted in Natalie Brand, *Complementarian Spirituality*, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 127.

choice of roles is not only stifling, but it has been shown to be yet another risk factor for depression.⁴⁸

In order to be an obedient follower of Christ, the Christian woman in a hierarchical church believes she must submit on the spiritual, sociological, and psychological levels. Spiritually, the Christian woman, wishing to show her submission and obedience to God through her acquiescence to men, allows others to silence her and to deny her the full use of her gifts and talents in the congregation and elsewhere. Sociologically, she suffers in her relationships and is not a vibrant member of the groups of which she is a part because she is not permitted to participate fully. Psychologically, her thoughts, words, and actions contribute to a spiraling downward of emotions which could ultimately result in depression and even suicide. The Christian woman is in a thought prison, speech prison, and a prison of immobility and inactivity due to the restrictions placed on her in the hierarchical church setting. Therefore, complementarianism contributes to her identity of inferiority.

Consequently, in a complementarian church setting, if a woman's spiritual gifts are stymied, her voice is silenced, and her self-esteem is saturated with negativity and destructive influences, then such a place is NOT a safe place for a Christian woman in the twenty-first century.

⁴⁸ Mario Piccinelli and Greg Wilkinson, "Gender differences in depression," *Journal of Psychiatry* 177 (2000), 487, Table 1.

CHAPTER 2

IN PURSUIT OF GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28 NIV). What does this mean and how are these categories of people (e.g. male and female) to be understood? Obviously, the categories still exist: there is Jew, Greek, slave, free, male and female in this world. Is the lack of distinction only present prior to entering the kingdom of God or are the differences sustained throughout one’s lifetime as a Christian? In other words, should the church maintain these categories to be used as restrictions in the body of Christ or can it possibly mean that joining the community of believers in Christ means that the distinctions of Jew, Greek, slave, free, male or female have been cleared away and that all have become new in Christ? The New Living Translation indicates this idea clearly: “This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT).

If these categories no longer hold a person in bondage, nor relegate anyone to a higher level, then this has serious implications for the Christian woman. Being a new person in Christ will affect her profoundly in a positive way in the three realms discussed in Chapter 1: spiritually, sociologically and psychologically.

Scripture gives evidence of the value, voice and gifts that God gives the woman, all of which may promote a positive sense of identity in the Christian woman. Yet, complementarian churches may emphasize certain verses and interpret them in such a way as to indicate that the woman holds a secondary status. Since all of God’s word

must be considered as authoritative, this chapter will examine multiple passages of Scripture, discovering that the woman is in fact created by God with equal worth to the man, and can and should be a valuable and contributing member of the local body of Christ.

In searching for God's perspective of the woman, these questions will be probed in the following sections: Who is She?, How Can She Use her Voice? (Here voice includes the concept of intellect.), For Which Roles Does God Equip Her? and Where Can She Use her Gifts? While the contents of the sections intertwine, the common theme throughout is the search for God's answer to each of the four questions.

Who is She?

The woman's identity will be explored by looking at four areas: First, she is created in God's image (*imago Dei*). Next, she is created to be a warrior type of helper. Third, she is created from Adam's side, and fourth, she is created to fulfill the cultural mandate.

"God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27 NET). For preliminary matters, it is important to note that BOTH male and female are made in God's *own* image. Bilezikian points out the significance of this doctrine, which refutes the patriarchal idea that the female was made in man's image, not God's:

Scripture thus affirms the full participation of both man and woman in the image of God. The Genesis text never refers to the image of God in relation to the man apart from the woman or vice versa. When God proceeded to create "man" in

his image, the recipients of the image were both male and female (1:26-27). The image of God pertained to their humanity rather than to their gender.¹

She is created to be a strong advisor and counterpart to the man. Because Adam was alone and the animals were not satisfactory companions, God created Eve. Note in Genesis 2:18, 20 the two different translations for the woman (underlined below):

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him... So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.” (NIV)

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion for him who corresponds to him... So the man named all the animals, the birds of the air, and the living creatures of the field, but for Adam no companion who corresponded to him was found.” (NET)

James explains who exactly this “helper” or “companion” is, using the creation account in Genesis 2. This woman created from the man is his *ezer-kenegdo*²:

Long before I started digging, scholars tallied up the twenty-one times *ezer* appears in the Old Testament: twice in Genesis for the woman (Genesis 2:18, 20), three times for nations to whom Israel appealed for military aid (Isaiah 30:5; Ezekiel 12:14; Daniel 11:34), and here’s the kicker – sixteen times for God as Israel’s helper (Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7, 26, 29; Psalms 20:2; 33:20; 70:5; 89:19 [translated “strength” in the NIV]; 115:9, 10, 11; 121:1-2; 124:8; 146:5; Hosea 13:9).³

Needless to say, identifying oneself as a strong warrior could definitely contribute positively to a woman’s identity. She is a vital part of kingdom work and plays an essential role as equal counterpart to the man.

¹ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1997), 22.

² Carolyn Custis James, *Half the Church: Recapturing God’s Global Vision for Women* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011), 112. *Kenegdo* refers to the woman being the man’s match.

³ James, *Half the Church*, 112.

In addition, in patriarchal settings, reference to Eve's creation from Adam may promote the idea of the woman's subordinate status to the man, as though she were a different sort of human being. However, Bilezikian notes that the man's words about the woman indicate that they are of the same kind.⁴ "Then the man said, 'This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called "woman," for she was taken out of man.'" (Genesis 2:23 NET).

Another issue regarding Eve's being fashioned from Adam refers to the word *rib* versus *side* of Adam. Note the two different translations of Genesis 2:21:

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. (NIV)

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while he was asleep, he took part of the man's side and closed up the place with flesh. (NET)

Yet James emphasizes the use of the word '*and*' in verse 23 and points out that it is more likely that God took not just one bone – a rib – from Adam to create Eve, but much more of Adam's body: "Hebrew scholars think Adam's 'side' is more accurate than Adams 'rib,' which actually corresponds much better with Adam's later reaction to the woman: 'This is bone of my bones *and* flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man.'" (Genesis 2:23; emphasis added).⁵ The point is that God has created woman in his own image and that she is not merely a smaller nor female clone of the first human creation (man).

⁴ Bilezikian, *Community* 101, 22-23.

⁵ James, *Half the Church*, 105.

In addition to both man and woman bearing the image of God, they also both receive the cultural mandate: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.’” (Genesis 1:28 NET). In hierarchical circles, it may be said that God is speaking only to the man when he gives this charge. However, as James notes, God gives this command to both the man and woman, and it is a much nobler task than physical reproduction:

God calls us to *multiply image bearers* – a new humanity that embraces the God who made us and whose purpose is for his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Multiplying for us moves beyond the purely biological to a much deeper and more challenging spiritual command that calls *every* image bearer to engage. The outcome of this kind of multiplying means that God’s glory spreads over the planet as his image bearers reflect his attributes – his goodness, mercy, love and justice, truth and grace, and more – wherever they are.⁶

Understood in this way, the woman has a much nobler view of herself. She is filled with a sense of worth because of who God created her to be: a creature made in God’s image from the same substance as man; with a value equal to the man’s; a strong warrior, fashioned to work and rule alongside the man, not beneath him. She has dominion and responsibility along with the man. Understanding these passages from the creation narrative can contribute to a strong positive self-concept in the Christian woman.

⁶ James, *Half the Church*, 70.

How Can She Use her Voice?

“But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. She must remain quiet.” (1 Timothy 2:12 NET). Churches embracing a gender hierarchy for the church use this one verse to silence the woman. She may be silenced in ecclesial settings such as worship gatherings, church governance meetings, Bible studies, prayer times, and she may be prohibited from teaching in these and other venues. An entire doctrine has been built around this one verse, unlike any other major doctrine.⁷

Much evidence exists that Paul needed to correct heresies circulating in the church in Ephesus. Paul was instructing Timothy on how to put an end to the false teaching that was destroying the church. “The letter is addressed to a church in turmoil threatened by heresy in its midst and fraught with bitter disputes over matters of faith and practice. That church was in dire need of practical and spiritual direction.”⁸ Cults in and around Ephesus were proclaiming that Eve created Adam and this was considered “secret knowledge” to the Gnostics. Paul may have been opposing these false beliefs with his inclusion of 1 Timothy 2:13 (NET): “For Adam was formed first and then Eve.”

In the Kroegers’ work, Paul’s use of the Greek verb ‘*authentein*’ (translated in 1 Timothy 2:12 above as *exercise authority*) is key to understanding the historical and cultural situation.⁹ The authors discuss the words *authentēs* (noun form) and *authentein* (verb form) at length and give the various ways they have been translated:

⁷ Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992), 12.

⁸ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not*, 43.

⁹ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not*, 88.

“to usurp authority” (KJV), “to have authority over,” “to dominate,” and “sometimes occur in contexts in which both sex and murder are present.”¹⁰ After exploring the historical setting and taking a deep and detailed look at the cultic beliefs, the authors conclude with this as the best translation of 1 Timothy 2:12: “I do not allow a woman to teach or proclaim herself author of man.”¹¹ So the emphasis here was on the heresy of Eve creating Adam and that this false doctrine should not be promoted by women.

Yet the patriarchal churches close a woman off from using her voice or from sharing her intellect and biblical knowledge with men. She is not supposed to teach God’s truth to men, for it would be considered usurping authority. In fact, The Danvers Statement explains this view in Affirmation # 6:

Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse...— In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Genesis 3:28; I Corinthians 11:2-16; I Timothy 2:11-15).¹²

However, this does not seem to agree with the full orb of Scripture, as noted by the Kroegers:

The fact is that women did indeed teach men, that women served as leaders, and that in doing so they enjoyed God's blessing and won the praise of other believers. Priscilla instructed the learned Apollos, Lois and Eunice taught Timothy, and Phoebe is named as an overseer and a deacon in the church at

¹⁰ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not*, for the various translations, see pages 84, 90, 91, and 95, respectively.

¹¹ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not*, 192.

¹² The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, “Affirmations,” *The Danvers Statement* (July 8, 2003): 2, accessed July 18, 2015, http://www.churchcouncil.org/iccp_org/Documents_ICCP/English/17_Male_Female_Distinctives_A&D.pdf.

Cenchrea. Furthermore, believers are enjoined to teach and to learn from one another, without reference to gender.¹³

The case of Priscilla is an excellent example of a woman using her God-given talent and knowledge to teach others. She, along with her husband Aquila, taught Apollos, who needed some correction of his theology.

He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and with great enthusiasm he spoke and taught accurately the facts about Jesus, although he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak out fearlessly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately. (Acts 18:25-26).

Another unusual case is Mary of Bethany, who sat at Jesus' feet to learn from him. Instead of running off to help with other work when her sister Martha called her, she stayed at Jesus' feet and did the more important thing. Jesus commended her for it. Although Luke gives no further information, it is possible that Mary learned from Jesus in order to teach others about him. The passage of her anointing Jesus' head for burial gives evidence that she had understood Jesus' teaching about himself and had become an astute theologian in her own right.¹⁴

Other examples abound of women who use their voice and intellect for good purposes in Scripture, and there is one woman in the gospels who stands out for not keeping quiet. She is known as the Samaritan woman or the woman at the well in John chapter 4. She came to the well to draw water, but instead was drawn out of "hiding" by Jesus through an enlightening conversation. Step by step, in dialoguing with her, he

¹³ Kroeger and Kroeger, *I Suffer Not*, 17.

¹⁴ Carolyn Custis James, *When Life and Beliefs Collide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 164-65.

revealed himself to her until she recognized him as the long-awaited Messiah. Then she must have been overcome with joy, which compelled her to return to town to share this wonderful revelation with the townsfolk, presumably men among them. Jesus did not stop her from proclaiming the truth. He did not tell her to speak only with the women in the village. No, and she herself led many to believe in Jesus, the Messiah. “Now many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the report of the woman who testified, ‘He told me everything I ever did.’ ... They said to the woman, ‘No longer do we believe because of your words, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this one really is the Savior of the world.’” (John 4:39, 42 NET).

In fact, in yet another situation involving Jesus, he himself explicitly sent a woman to give the message of his resurrection to men. Mary Magdalene was the first to see the resurrected Jesus outside the tomb and he gave her the task to tell the others.

The Gospel of John narrates it thus:

Jesus replied, “Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. Go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene came and informed the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them what Jesus had said to her. (John 20:17-18 NET).

This is the important role Mary Magdalene played in using her voice. “... she was sent by Jesus as the first witness to the resurrection. He commissioned her to tell His disciples the good news. She became, as Augustine called her, ‘an apostle to the apostles.’”¹⁵

¹⁵ Alice Mathews, *A Woman Jesus Can Teach: New Testament Women Help You Make Today's Choices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 2012), 152-53.

Therefore, when the full counsel of Scripture is examined, one may see many instances of a woman taking the opportunity to employ her voice and intellect to teach, to tell others about Jesus, or to proclaim God's truth in a powerful way. A woman need not drift toward a negative self-concept when studying these passages clearly. She need not despair of having no voice or of not "mattering." Nay, she is of great worth to the Almighty God. The Bible mentions Priscilla, the woman at the well, Mary Magdalene and others. God her Creator has given her a voice, and Jesus Christ his Son has shown in his own words and deeds that he respected and valued women and their abilities. All of this should contribute to a positive self-concept in the Christian woman.

For Which Roles Does God Equip Her?

"Now you are Christ's body, and each of you is a member of it. And God has placed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, gifts of healing, helps, gifts of leadership, different kinds of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:27-28 NET). Is each of these gifts and abilities specified for one sex and not the other? What about the priesthood of all believers? "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9 NET). First, a look into history will highlight a number of women who served as prophets in the Bible. Then, a discussion of other positions of leadership and service in the church today will follow.

Prophets

Several women stand out in the Bible who carried out the role of divine prophet, among them Miriam, Huldah and Deborah in the Old Testament and Anna in the Gospel

of Luke. Yet rarely do church leaders and teachers give them proper homage or the honor that they give the patriarchs of the Bible.

In the Old Testament Miriam was a leader for the Israelites in Egypt. In sermons or Sunday school lessons she is seldom named along with her famous brothers, yet Micah 6:4 (NET) gives her a prominent place: “In fact, I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I delivered you from that place of slavery. I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to lead you.”

Huldah is another name not often mentioned, but she played a decisive role in Israel’s history. Huldah the prophet served as God’s spokesperson to benefit the nation of Israel when Hilkiah the high priest and the king’s counselors sought her out: “and she said to them: ‘This is what the Lord God of Israel says’...” (2 Kings 22:15a NET). She spoke strongly, decisively, and to the point. She simply used her gift. The high priest Hilkiah and the rest of the crowd from the palace also knew she was speaking for God. They took her message back to the king. Huldah was a woman of distinction who used her God-given spiritual gift for the benefit of a nation.¹⁶

Another prominent figure in the Old Testament worth noting is Deborah. “Now Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.” (Judges 4:4 NET). Not only did she fulfill her role as leader of Israel as prophet and judge, but she also became a victorious military commander:

On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this victory song:

¹⁶ Alice Mathews, *A Woman God Can Use: Old Testament Women Help You Make Today’s Choices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 2012), 138-42.

“When the leaders took the lead in Israel,
When the people answered the call to war—
Praise the Lord!...
Warriors were scarce,
they were scarce in Israel,
until you arose, Deborah,
until you arose as a motherly protector in Israel.”
(Judges 5:1-2, 7 NET).

Complementarians may claim that God uses a woman such as Deborah when there is no man around. Not so! The author Dee Alei emphatically disagrees:

I’ve heard it taught that God only allowed Deborah in these positions of leadership because there were no qualified men available. Baloney! God is perfectly capable of raising up whoever He wants to put in leadership. God says in His Word, “**By me** kings reign, and rulers decree justice. **By me** princes rule, and nobles, all the judges of the earth” (Proverbs 8:15-16, emphasis added) and “I commanded judges to be over my people Israel” (2 Samuel 7:11). Is God’s declaration only true in circumstances where the person in authority is a man?¹⁷

Furthermore, it must be noted that if God could make a donkey speak, surely he could raise up a man if he wanted to.¹⁸

The New Testament also attests to women using the gift of prophecy to benefit God’s people. The gospel of Luke tells about the prophet Anna. When Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the temple for purification rites, she prophesied about Jesus as Redeemer. “There was also a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old, having been married to her husband for seven years until his death.... At that moment, she came up to them and began to give thanks to God and to

¹⁷ Dee Alei, *From Bondage to Blessing: The Redemption, Restoration and Release of God’s Women* (Kent, England: Sovereign World, 2002), 63.

¹⁸ “Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, ‘What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times?’” (Numbers 22:28 NET)

speak about the child to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.” (Luke 2:36, 38 NET).

The New Testament also attests elsewhere to women prophesying. For example, “On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. (He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.)” (Acts 21:8-9 NET).

Paul gave specific instructions for how women in that culture should prophesy: “But any woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered disgraces her head, for it is one and the same thing as having a shaved head.” (1 Corinthians 11:5 NET). So, women were continuing to carry out this role into New Testament times for the benefit of the people. In fact, the Apostle Paul noted the value and purpose of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:3 (NET): “But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement, and consolation.”

Other Positions of Leadership

The Apostle Paul provided this version of the spiritual gifts in his letter to the Romans with no reference to gender restrictions:

... so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:5b-8 NIV)

Given these wonderful and encouraging verses which highlight multiple roles in the body of Christ, it is sad to note that in some complementarian churches, only two areas of leadership are open to the woman in their midst: the kitchen and the nursery.

Or she may serve in teaching Sunday school, as long as she is teaching children or other women. The offices of pastor, elder or deacon are reserved for men. Yet the qualifications for these positions may not be as clear as complementarians claim.

What about the qualifications for elders/overseers and deacons? For the elder or overseer:

Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) (1 Timothy 3:2 NIV).

For the deacon: "A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well." (1 Timothy 3:12 NIV). Are these restrictions meant to exclude faithful women? Or could it be that what is important is that the person have only one spouse (if one at all), be faithful, of good character and of an upstanding reputation?

Complementarian leaders who choose to restrict women from holding these offices do so by emphasizing the requirement of being husband of one wife. However, typically, the other requirements are not strictly adhered to. Bilezikian clearly points out this flaw in their observance of Scripture:

In other words, according to the Pastoral Letters, the following categories of believers do not qualify for those ministries regardless of their worthiness and the legitimacy of their spiritual gifts: single men, married men with no children, married men with only one child, married men with at least one child who is disobedient, and women – who are out altogether (1 Tim 2:12).¹⁹

¹⁹ Bilezikian, *Community 101*, 105.

There is much debate over these issues and whether or not the mandate for overseer and deacon is historical and cultural or whether it is still binding today. Currently within the complementarian camp, there is movement among some to allow women to fill the office of deacon. One argument for it is that the New Testament diaconate did include women.²⁰ Stewart recognizes that the work was performed by women in the early church. “All can observe that the New Testament shows ways of including women in some forms of recognized ministry under the rubrics of ‘fellow worker’ (Euodia and Syntyche in Phil 4:3), and of ‘deacon’ or ‘servant’ (Phoebe in Rom 1:1).”²¹

One particular conservative denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America, has traditionally not allowed women to serve as deacons, but has many voices promoting the idea now. Originally in its founding, the leaders “held to the traditional position on the role of women in church offices.”²² This traditional position means that women cannot hold an ordained church office such as pastor, elder or deacon. A deacon is typically a man elected to serve the physical and material needs of the church and is not a part of the Session, or governing body of the church. Even as the official debate continues, some churches in this denomination have allowed women to become

²⁰ Ken Stewart, *Ten Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 243 n. 57.

²¹ Stewart, *Ten Myths About Calvinism*, 244.

²² “Presbyterian Church in America: History,” accessed July 25, 2015, <http://www.pcanet.org/history/>. This denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America was founded in 1973 in response to the more liberal leanings of the mainline PCUS, which was the southern branch of Presbyterianism. The more conservative leaders within the PCUS denomination wanted to steer clear of liberal social issues of the time, such as abortion, women’s liberation, and women filling church offices.

deacons or deaconesses. In spite of a slight lessening of the restrictions of women in this role of serving, there is still a barrier against ordination. These women becoming deacons, or deaconesses (as is the term more often used), are not ordained, but rather commissioned for the task. Perhaps to soften the blow to women, some PCA churches have thereby chosen not to ordain their male deacons either. They commission or install the male deacons also, rather than ordain them, so that it is level across the diaconate.

To offer more insight about deacons and elders in the Presbyterian churches, the term deacon comes from the Greek *diakonos*, and can be translated as *servant* or *minister*. The term elder comes from *presbuteros*, and can be translated overseer. As stated above, in the Presbyterian tradition, the deacon will serve or assist the congregation with physical needs or property and financial issues, while the elder will either rule or teach. With women allowed to fill the role of deacon, it means she is given the opportunity to *serve*, not to rule or teach.²³

Another voice from the Reformed camp promoting women as deacons is Jamin Hubner. He bases his findings on the spiritual gifts:

Instead of assuming the burden of proof is on the one who believes in female deacons - and therefore puts all the weight on Scripture's explicit mentioning of female deacons (or something similar), I assume instead (in the spirit of the New Testament, I hope) that the role and function of church members are determined primarily by the gifts specifically given to them by God (Acts 11:29;

²³ The governing body of each local church is called the Session. It is made up of elders. The pastor (or pastors, depending on the size of the church) is called a teaching elder and he sits on the Session. In addition, the men elected to the office of ruling elder serve on the Session. This Session, made up only of male elders, is the group in each local body that steers the direction of the church, deals with disciplinary matters (including those involving females), interviews newcomers desiring to become members, and makes decisions that govern the church. Visitors are usually allowed to attend the Session meetings, but they do not have a vote. There are, however, occasional congregational meetings in which the entire lay membership may vote on certain items.

Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:7-31; Eph 4:1-14; cf. Heb 2:2-4). If there are no real prohibitions or sound theological reasons against the idea of female deacons, and if the Spirit gives gifts to women that correspond to the task of being a deacon, then there seems to be every reason to affirm the legitimacy of female deacons. I do not believe that God gives spiritual gifts to people only to prohibit them from using those gifts - especially in the context of the church!²⁴

Hubner also appeals to history and notes that the ancient early church document from the 200s, the *Didascalia Apostolorum* mentions deaconesses in the Syrian Christian Church.²⁵ In fact, he concludes that women have been filling the office of deacon across time and tradition:

Our brief survey of church history leads us to conclude that female deacons have been active, recognized servants of God throughout virtually every major period of the church. Furthermore, Christian leaders were willing to stand up for the legitimacy of female deacons even when the rest of the church didn't - precisely because they found female deacons to be Scriptural and edifying to the church. In particular, supporters appealed to one or more of the following passages: Rom 16:1-2, 1 Tim 3:11; and 1 Tim 5:9.

Those who believed in the scriptural legitimacy of female deacons were not isolated to one tradition or one period of history.²⁶

Indeed, examining Holy Writ leads one to return to the spiritual gifts, which do not appear to be connected to gender when given out by the Holy Spirit. In fact, a complete and close study of the Bible provides many examples of women who carried out such roles, which are reserved for men today in complementarian circles.

²⁴ Jamin Hubner, *A Case for Female Deacons* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock 2015), 2-3.

²⁴ Hubner, *A Case*, 54.

²⁶ Hubner, *A Case*, 77.

In closing, why would a Christian woman desire to fill an office in the church? Is it merely to usurp male authority? No, a godly woman wants to use her gifts and talents for the kingdom of God. Paul's letter to the Ephesians gives explicit reasons for these spiritual gifts: to build up the body and create unity in Christ:

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it... So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:4-7, 11-12 NIV).

The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25 offers a clear, but disconcerting view of the consequences of not using one's gifts and talents. But the Christian woman in a patriarchal tradition is restricted and may not be allowed to use her gifts in her ecclesial setting. Reading this parable had a profound effect on Alice Mathews:

When I came to the end of a slow and careful reading of the parable of the talents, I realized that I was crying. And I heard myself praying, "Lord, will you cut me some slack because they won't let me use all that you created me to be and to do?" In the more than three decades since that morning, I've come alongside scores of other Christian women, who, like me, have felt trapped between God's gifts and a church saying no.²⁷

Conclusion

The central text for a complementarian position is 1 Timothy 2:11-15 (NET):

A woman must learn quietly with all submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. She must remain quiet. For Adam was formed first and then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, because she was fully deceived, fell into transgression.

²⁷ Alice Mathews, "How I Changed My Mind about Women in Leadership," in *How I Changed My Mind about Women in Leadership: Compelling Stories from Prominent Evangelicals*, ed. Alan F. Johnson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 159.

But she will be delivered through childbearing, if she continues in faith and love and holiness with self-control.

Complementarians use this passage from 1 Timothy 2 (NET) for several of their claims for the woman, and may employ these verses thus: **A)** to give the woman an inferior or secondary status (vs. 13 “For Adam was formed first and then Eve.”); **B)** to silence her voice (vss. 11-12 “A woman must learn quietly with all submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. She must remain quiet.”); and **C)** to restrict her roles (vss. 14-15 “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, because she was fully deceived, fell into transgression. But she will be delivered through childbearing, if she continues in faith and love and holiness with self-control.”)

But consider some of the deeper implications of this passage. Take each issue in order, examine the full counsel of Scripture, and the biblical rationale for egalitarianism emerges. First, the woman did not receive a secondary status by being created after Adam. Rather, a woman can take joy in knowing she is created in God’s image to be an *ezer-kenegdo* and that she is of great worth. Next, her silenced voice may conflict with how God has equipped her to contribute to the body of Christ. God may have given her one of the spiritual gifts that require her to employ her voice and intellect in a leadership role in the church. If so, she should instead be free to honor and obey her Creator, using her voice accordingly. Finally, traditionalists wish to restrict her roles because of Eve’s fall into sin because of her deception. In other words, traditionalists wish to continue to punish all women for Eve’s sin and have them carry that guilt with them. This means that Christ’s crucifixion did not atone for their sin, and that Christ’s resurrection and redemptive power have not set women free. Only men have been set

free. Yet the Christian woman who knows Christ died for her knows her sins are forgiven, and even when she does sin, she has an Advocate with the Father.²⁸

For a fuller picture of the deeper implications of the patriarchal view of this passage (1 Timothy 2:11-15), here are Bilezikian's own words:

Because Eve was created after Adam and because, having been deceived in the Fall, she became a transgressor, the alternative absolutist interpretation would require that no woman could ever teach or have authority over men. This role would be assigned exclusively to men. This would mean, however, that Calvary and Pentecost make no difference to the status of female subordination that had allegedly developed because of the Fall. In other words, the cross of Jesus could not release sufficient grace to reverse the disgrace presumably brought upon all women by Eve's offense. This would also mean that because Adam was made first, all believing men may receive release from their consequences of the Fall (Gen. 3:17-19) through the redemptive work of Christ; but that redemptive work would fail to lift the legacy of guilt that believing women would allegedly continue to inherit from Eve's actions in the Garden. In other words, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ do not have the power to make all things new for women, to reverse the effects of the Fall and to achieve a new creation. Indeed, some churchmen seem to be willing to reduce Christianity to the status of a gender religion, complete with a divinity controlled by maleness both within his nature and in the realm of his creational and redemptive priorities.²⁹

The passages studied indicate the intrinsic worth of the woman created in God's image, equal to and not inferior to the man. They also provide the platform for a woman to use her voice and intellect as well as promote the use of her God-given gifts in leadership roles. Armed with the biblical knowledge that her gifts are not gender-based or gender-restricted, she would be able to use them, carrying out leadership roles, confident that the God who gifted her had prepared works in advance for her to do.

²⁸ "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.) But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One." (1 John 2:1).

²⁹ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101*, 115-16.

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10 NIV).

Therefore, understanding the truth of these biblical passages should contribute not to an identity of inferiority, but to the Christian woman’s true and positive identity, as she stands before God. Spiritually, she recognizes that God has equipped her, sociologically she is able to take on her God-given roles, and psychologically, she has a true sense of her value as a woman made *imago Dei*. “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32 NIV).

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to help the reader gain understanding about this thesis topic, it is worth one's time to read on both sides of the theological debate. Therefore, these recommended books showcase the perspective of both complementarians and egalitarians. In addition to these volumes which highlight the study of Scripture, there are sources, secular and Christian, that provide research relating to women and their self-concept. In order to acquire more insight into the focus of this thesis, the reader is advised to read these works, which highlight the scientific side of how one's identity is formed. They include research which focuses on the impact of one's religious beliefs on one's concept of self. Therefore, taken as a whole, the following resources would give the reader a fuller picture of the spiritual, sociological and psychological effects on a Christian woman's self-concept, whether she is involved in a traditional or an egalitarian church setting.

Complementarianism

For the reader who wishes to explore the complementarian side of this issue, the following are sources that will be helpful. As noted before, this view can also be called traditional, patriarchal or hierarchical.

Woman – Man's Completion by W. E. Best¹ is a valuable book for helping the reader understand complementarianism. Best uses the Bible to create a well-defined description of hierarchical thought. His work would have been enhanced, however, by

¹ W. E. Best, *Woman – Man's Completion*, (Houston: South Belt Assembly of Christ, 1966).

the inclusion of case studies and a reference to the single woman. In spite of that and even though W. E. Best published this book in 1966, in it he reveals the Scriptural foundation on which many traditionalists stand today. Therefore, it is a book worth reading.

For the reader choosing to explore the patriarchal view from a woman's perspective, one resource would be Susan Foh's *Women and the Word of God*.² Foh includes a large amount of exegesis, which sets it apart from the previous source. Another benefit of choosing to read this work which explains the traditional rationale is that it is written by a female with a high view of Scripture and a scholarly perspective.

Another work dedicated to highlighting the traditional view is *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective: A Study in Role Relationships and Authority* by James B. Hurley.³ Whereas Foh's book (above) delves much into exegetical interpretation of Scripture, Hurley discusses the role of the woman through a historical and cultural perspective. Therefore, this book may give the reader further insight into the background of complementarianism. Hurley does this by showing the basis for hierarchy through his understanding of history, traditions, and biblical interpretations of gender roles. It is worth delving into because the author has been a leading proponent of this view of Scripture.

² Susan T. Foh, *Women and the Word of God: A Response to Biblical Feminism*, (n.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1978).

³ James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective: A Study in Role Relationships and Authority*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981).

Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church by Samuele Bacchiocchi⁴ is another valuable resource in that it has served as a helpful and highly-regarded reference for other complementarian scholars. It provides the Scriptural basis for the reader wanting to understand even better the traditional view of women's roles. The fact that its thoroughness has made it a primer for other traditionalists and that it is considered clear and fair in its treatment of the topic make this book a highly recommended one.

The reader wishing to study this traditional view at length would also do well to read *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem.⁵ What makes this book so different and helpful is the array of authors. Well-known teachers, pastors and theologians from the evangelical community contributed essays to create this volume. Furthermore, the work of these writers was compiled to refute the claims of egalitarians. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (RBMW)* offers the reader arguments from a variety of perspectives (e.g. sociological, theological), thereby offering a comprehensive presentation. So it is well worth reading due to its broad sweep and clear portrayal of the complementarian Christian.

⁴ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrian Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1987).

⁵ John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991).

Egalitarianism

The following sources will be useful to the reader wanting to delve further into the egalitarian view. Included here is a book by Carolyn Custis James which is not overtly egalitarian. However, since the contents are compatible with the egalitarian perspective, it is included here.

Stanley Grenz wrote two books that relate well to this thesis topic. In *Sexual Ethics* ⁶ he explains the doctrine of *Imago Dei*, and how the image of God is reflected in human beings through their biological sex. In doing so, Grenz offers profound biblical arguments for equal status of men and women.

In *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (which Grenz wrote with Denise Muir Kjesbo) ⁷, the authors address such themes as a woman in the local church setting and the use of voice as it relates to participation in the local church body. This relates directly to the thesis topic. Therefore, both of Grenz's books would be worthwhile reads.

In addition to the above sources, Gilbert Bilezikian's work *Community 101* ⁸ stands out as significant in the promotion of egalitarianism. In this book Bilezikian addresses the roles of church leadership and he analyzes biblical passages relating to

⁶ Stanley J. Grenz, *Sexual Ethics: An Evangelical Perspective* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

⁷ Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1995).

⁸ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as Community of Oneness* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1997).

the parameters and qualifications of the candidate. He does a superb job of addressing the concerns about Scriptural interpretation by traditionalists. He provides arguments against biblical hierarchy, which is another advantageous feature of *Community 101*. For these reasons, this book offers a clear view of the basis for egalitarianism.

Another interesting book is *From Bondage to Blessing: The Redemption, Restoration and Release of God's Women* by Dee Alei.⁹ Its unique contribution is its coverage of the broad sweep of influences on the role of women. She walks the reader through history with her study of the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, the early church, as well as various philosophical influences and historical movements. In a very readable format, Alei covers much of Scripture, finding evidence for the egalitarian side of the argument. She analyzes several controversial passages and also looks at the history of the church in its view toward women. Because this is a compact volume, replete with quotes and references to other worthy sources, it is worth checking out.

In the volume of essays titled *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, edited by Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis and Gordon D. Fee,¹⁰ the reader will find works by a number of prominent evangelical scholars. The contributors come from different cultural and theological backgrounds and present different aspects of the complementarian – egalitarian debate. Therefore, the reader may even pick and choose which chapter or chapters to read, according to interest or

⁹ Dee Alei, *From Bondage to Blessing: The Redemption, Restoration and Release of God's Women* (Kent, England: Sovereign World, 2002).

¹⁰ Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Groothuis and Gordon Fee, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005).

relevance. *Discovering Biblical Equality* is a good reference for its breadth of topics and is written in a style accessible to the layperson, while remaining true to a rigorous academic standard. This book is definitely worth reading for the person desiring to understand the theological rationale for those who promote egalitarianism.

Another book by Gilbert Bilezikian is recommended here: *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says about a Woman's Place in Church and Family's*.¹¹ In this third edition, Bilezikian traces the status of the woman in the Bible from before the Fall to her place in the church in the New Testament. He also includes discussion of her role in the family, but an outstanding feature is his awareness (through interaction with his college students) of how women in the hierarchical camp understand their roles. These features and his arguments refuting the complementarian James Hurley make this book by Bilezikian a recommended one for understanding the debate.

Another work for learning about this side of the theological issue is the volume titled *How I Changed My Mind about Women in Leadership: Compelling Stories from Prominent Evangelicals* edited by Alan F. Johnson.¹² *How I Changed My Mind* has something in common with *Discovering Biblical Equality* (mentioned above), in that they include a few of the same contributors. This too is a compilation of writings by well-known authors in the Christian world, but offers differing angles to explain their points of view. Each author tells his or her own story of their journey to becoming an

¹¹ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says about a Woman's Place in Church and Family*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006).

¹² Alan F. Johnson, ed., *How I Changed My Mind about Women in Leadership: Compelling Stories from Prominent Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010).

egalitarian. This book also features Christian leaders from other cultures who are internationally known. For the person wishing to explore all aspects of the debate, it would be a fitting companion to *Discovering Biblical Equality*.

Half the Church by Carolyn Custis James¹³ offers a bold new perspective for women and God's purpose for them in creation. James looks at who the woman is, where the woman stands in this fallen world and what she can become. The author uses Scripture throughout this work while relating it to how the woman functions in today's society. She discusses roles and identity as they relate to the woman. One way in which this book breaks away from the others is that Carolyn James delves into the use of the Old Testament term *ezer*. This book is a must-read for anyone wanting to revisit the biblical claims of either the complementarian or the egalitarian side.

The Concept of Self

This section highlights books which treat the concept of self in the woman. The reader will find both Christian and secular authors whose works are devoted to studying the whole woman, her thoughts, words and actions. The secular works, which are published in professional journals, provide charts and statistics from their studies to substantiate their findings about self-esteem. All of these articles and books present research that is connected to the thesis topic in that they show how a woman develops her identity.

¹³ Carolyn Custis James, *Half the Church: Recapturing God's Global Vision for Women* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011).

Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind by Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger and Jill Mattuck Tarule¹⁴ is an excellent resource. All three areas discussed in the book (self, voice, and mind) are important and relevant to the topic of this thesis. While a secular work, the research is exceptionally valuable to understanding the Christian woman and her place in the church. These authors connect knowing and learning to the woman's view of herself. They also touch on the moral or spiritual dimensions in a woman's life, as well as a woman's perceptions of knowledge and intelligence. One of the interesting features of the book is knowing that the authors' study of *knowing* came out of 135 interviews with women. It would be helpful to the reader in providing insight from the results of psychological research.

This next source combines psychology with a study in theology, namely Christian patriarchy. For the reader who wants to learn about psychological research regarding the Christian woman, Leslie Postovoit offers such a study. Her article, "The Attitudes Toward Christian Women Scale (ACWS): Initial Efforts Towards the Development of An Instrument Measuring Patriarchal Beliefs"¹⁵ deals with a study on the effects of patriarchy on women. While it is academic research in the field of psychology, the

¹⁴ Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger and Jill Mattuck Tarule *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

¹⁵ Leslie Postovoit, "The Attitudes Toward Christian Women Scale (ACWS): Initial Efforts Towards the Development of an Instrument Measuring Patriarchal Beliefs," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 9, no. 2 (1990): 65-72.

content is accessible to the layperson. It would offer the interested reader a view of scientific research that is not often available nor utilized in the church.

The next source makes a case for the connection between voice and self. This book with relevance for studying the self-concept of women is *Silencing the Self: Women and Depression* by Dana Crowley Jack.¹⁶ The author equates the voice with self and discusses its importance relative to identity and self-esteem. It is full of references to psychological studies which support the premise of her book. The reader will find it an interesting and clear treatise on crucial aspects of a woman's self-concept. Among other areas covered, she includes studies of social expectations, gender, morality, silence and depression. It is well worth reading for someone who wants to understand the inner-connectedness of these aspects of a woman's identity.

In a similar vein to Belenky's *Women's Ways of Knowing* is the book *Women as learners: the significance of gender in adult learning* by Hayes and Flannery.¹⁷ This would be a very helpful resource for understanding how a woman functions in regard to her self-concept. Here, the authors discuss such issues as the difference between knowing and learning as well as different kinds of learning. They also connect a woman's voice to self, as did Dana Crowley Jack. Hayes and Flannery propose the idea of voice as a metaphor for finding one's identity and they study the theme of silence, which alone

¹⁶ Dana Crowley Jack, *Silencing the Self: Women and Depression* (1991; repr., NY, NY: Harper Perennial 1st ed. William Morrow Paperbacks, 1993).

¹⁷ Elisabeth Hayes and Daniele D. Flannery, *Women as Learners: The Significance of Gender in Adult Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000).

makes it a relevant read for the person desiring to explore the differing theological interpretations of Scripture passages regarding women in the church.

Finally, *Preaching That Speaks to Women* by Alice Mathews¹⁸ is a valuable source of information for the multiple dimensions of a woman's life. The reader will find deep insight and breadth of knowledge from this author's research, covering areas such as: morality, psychology, epistemology, faith, issues of power, and identity, as they relate to the woman. While its focus is to help preachers know how to preach to women in their congregation, it is a valuable resource for understanding the woman and all the dynamics and factors that inform her self-concept. Furthermore, while scholarly in its approach, this work offers a different perspective regarding the woman's self-concept because it is theologically based and written by a Christian woman who has experienced these very issues.

Summary

The works cited in this chapter have been helpful in formulating and focusing the research for this project. However, in both the fields of biblical research and psychosocial research on women's issues, researchers continue to explore relevant issues related to Christian women's self-esteem and personal growth. Readers interested in this topic will want to consult the books and journal articles recommended here and continue exploring.

¹⁸ Alice Mathews, *Preaching That Speaks to Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003).

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT AND PRESENTATION

Purpose

The purpose of the project was to show Christian women new perspectives on women in Scripture. Using the Bible as her basis, the thesis writer set out to highlight key passages regarding the woman in general and certain females in the Bible. She purposed to introduce the audience to often overlooked information in these verses, while maintaining an orthodox view of Scripture.

Plan

The project encompassed all of Scripture, so the thesis writer decided to divide the presentation into five sections. She created a Power Point presentation and chose these divisions in order to guide her audience chronologically through Scripture:

1) The Creation Narrative, 2) Women in the Old Testament, 3) Jesus and the Gospels, 4) Women in the New Testament, and 5) Kingdom Building. The Power Point presentation is in Appendix A.

Process

Supplies, including paper and pens, were given to the participants for the purpose of note-taking. The participants were provided with a handout showing in color each of the five slides displaying the title for that division. Next to the slide were lines for note-taking or jotting down questions. This handout is found in Appendix B.

Participants

Women were chosen who were friends or acquaintances of the thesis writer. Of all the women invited, ten were able to accept and participate. Their background was significant to the project. All ten participants had been Christians for many years and were actively involved in a church. All of them were either currently connected to a hierarchical denomination such as the Presbyterian Church in America or were at one time connected to such a church. One participant had previously been involved in the Roman Catholic Church. Their ages and marital status varied. Their ages ranged from early thirties to mid-seventies. Four were married; six were single. A general description of the participants is given in Appendix C.

Of the twenty women invited, the ten participants that were able to come proved to be an ideal number for the size of the conference room and for allowing ample time for all to contribute to the discussion. Their personal and professional life was honored by giving advanced notice and keeping to the schedule that Saturday morning. The women received detailed instructions to the church, where the parish hall and conference room were handicap-equipped for one of the participants.

A further enticement for the participants was inviting them for a cooked breakfast with coffee and juice, creating a friendly environment from the start. That morning, after enjoying a brief time of breakfast and informal fellowship in the parish hall, they convened in the conference room. Participants were invited to introduce themselves to create an atmosphere of openness and sharing. Instead of answering a superficial question such as naming their favorite flavor of ice cream, each woman was

asked to tell the group how and where she had come to know the thesis writer. This not only gave insight into the life of each participant, but it also opened up avenues for further connection and offered a certain level of familiarity and vulnerability within the group. This facilitated more open discussion throughout the morning.

Women were given time for questions and comments at the end of each of the five sections of the Power Point teaching, including agreement or disagreement with the material presented. This open style of discussion enhanced the atmosphere and provided interesting results. Women's intellect was honored by giving women time to express their views along with their knowledge of Scripture, their expertise, and their experiences as female members of churches. Their combined knowledge was especially helpful when discussing the historical context and the social customs of other cultures.

Preparations

The thesis writer chose her church conference room as the best venue to carry out the project presentation. The conference room provided ample seating and a long table for the ten participants. A laptop and projector were used to display the Power Point presentation.

The date and time were set for Saturday morning, November 15, 2014 from 9 AM to 12 noon. This room is near the fellowship hall and kitchen, and since the participants were invited to arrive at 9 AM, coffee, juice and breakfast foods were provided. The serving area was seasonally decorated with fall colors and decorations, making it a warm and welcoming place. Thus, the women were able to meet and enjoy

some breakfast and fellowship before gathering in the conference room for the presentation.

Presentation

As stated before, the thesis writer chose to divide the material into five sections to form natural breaks in the presentation, and Power Point provided the best medium to deliver this information to the participants. Halfway through the morning, the participants took a break and were invited back into the fellowship hall for more breakfast items. When they reconvened in the conference room, the remaining sections were presented and discussed.

After each section of the project had been presented, the participants were invited to comment or ask questions. A recording was made of these comments and questions. The women engaged in much discussion about the material presented, and it is presented in Appendix D.

At the very end, after all discussion had drawn to a close, the participants filled out a written survey, a copy of which is in Appendix E. The purpose of the survey was to find out if any of the material presented was new or if this information might contribute to a changed perspective. This was the conclusion of the project, and the entire gathering lasted almost three hours, ending before noon. The hand-written responses and comments provided on the surveys were also transcribed (Appendix F).

Procedure

The thesis writer gathered all the recordings of the spoken comments and questions during the discussions. She transcribed all of this material and compiled the results. The transcribed discussions are organized in order as they took place, under each of the five sections of the Power Point presentation. The discussion was free-flowing, and all ten women had the opportunity to contribute, while some gave considerably more input than others. At the very end of the session, portions of the final comments of one participant were inaudible, due to a minor malfunction of the recording device.

Since the presentation, there has been no formal follow-up with the participants. However, because the group expressed interest in the sources, the thesis writer sent a list of books to them electronically soon after the date of the project. They included a reading list from one of the doctoral residencies and a few other book titles that have proved helpful in this theological study. Furthermore, a few of the participants have engaged in informal discussions with the thesis writer since the project presentation. These are friends of the presenter who have expressed interest in this study of women and it has often been the topic of interest in their conversations, as they have also spent time delving into the theological debate of hierarchical and egalitarian churches.

The results were analyzed, noting primary, secondary and tertiary issues that surfaced in the questions and comments of the participants. The survey responses were tallied, indicating whether or not this information from Scripture was new and whether or not it did (or could) cause a change in the participant's thinking. The writer's

hypothesis was that complementarianism might contribute to an identity of inferiority in the Christian woman. Therefore, she was searching for evidence that this new information would perhaps strengthen a woman's concept of self, thereby improving her identity.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES, OBSTACLES, OUTLOOK AND AN OBSERVATION

Introduction

The Outcomes from this project include observations regarding ideas that dominated the discussion, underlying issues, and relevant comments from the written survey. The section on Obstacles discusses necessary changes revealed by the written survey results. If those changes are implemented, they may produce different results. The section on Outlook addresses topics for the future, namely areas surfaced by this project that call for further research. The Observation section deals with the issue of self-concept in the Christian woman.

Outcomes

Women in many hierarchical churches lack key elements needed to honor them as women made in God's image. This project was structured to give them dignity and respect as persons, offering them a warm, welcoming atmosphere, time to express their voice, and space to share their knowledge and expertise.

Ideas that Dominated the Discussion

Throughout the entire morning there was no shortage of discussion. These women had a lot to say when they were able to discuss these ideas freely. It was important to bring this topic before them.

In the beginning (the Creation narrative), the concept of being created by God and called an *ezer*, a 'strong warrior woman,' highlighted the comments by the women.

In this first section they noted the transforming effect that the so-called “weaker” sex has on the “stronger” one, in contrast to the hierarchical teaching that the woman was to be the receiver, not the initiator.

A major theme of the teaching was the roles women played in Scripture. Therefore, throughout all five segments of discussion, the role of women remained a dominant issue. The participants noted that New Testament women were able to fill many roles in the church not available to them as women today. One participant pointed out the important work carried out in the community by women in primitive societies, and how the Industrial Revolution has changed that, especially in the West.

They also noted that education was a factor in women fulfilling teaching or other roles, especially in biblical times when women were not educated formally. Giftedness, too, was noted, in that sometimes women today are gifted for a task, but not allowed to carry it out due to their sex.

Other ideas that prevailed were varied and often carried examples from real life. In the Creation Narrative, ideas included that of the woman as saving or rescuing the man and the woman as warrior and protector. In the Old Testament section, the women talked about faith and the biblical figures of Miriam, Huldah and Rahab. They also mentioned being mutual helpers. In the segment on Jesus and the Gospels, the discussion included the Samaritan woman, Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene as the gospel-bearer to men gospel-bearers, and the new concept of the inclusion of women that Jesus initiated. They remarked on the fact that women ministered to Jesus and traveled with him.

It was during the discussion of the New Testament teaching that the talk centered on learning, being educated in the Bible in order to teach (or the prohibition of same), equality and gifting. Here the women also commented on the slides that highlighted biblical passages naming women in roles such as teacher, deacon, apostle or leader and that God calls both men and women to serve the church. Finally, during the final segment, on Kingdom Building, there was mention of God's priorities, God's way, what God wants and how to please God.

Issues Underlying the Dominant Ideas

One issue stood out as underlying the comments: the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. Because the prevailing ecclesial tradition of the majority of the participants emphasizes this doctrine, it is logical that the women would keep this foremost in mind and rely on this in order to understand their situation. In other words, instead of seeing their treatment in patriarchy as an injustice, they can turn to this belief as a source of comfort, knowing that God is ultimately in control.

Closely related to the above issue is that of being a received knower. If a woman relies on her male pastors and elders as the main source for teaching her Scripture, then she is choosing to trust what those male leaders say about the Bible. In other words, a received knower depends on others to teach her truth, rather than searching for it on her own and trusting her own intellect and judgment.

Anger provided another subtext for the discussion, as the women grappled with wanting to serve in some capacities for which they were qualified, but which were

closed to them due to their sex. Anger was not considered (by some participants) a proper avenue for expressing their feeling of injustice.

Another underlying issue was one's marital status. If married, a woman might find a voice in the church through her husband, as the quiet rudder, steering him. However, as one single woman proclaimed, she is not a rudder to anyone! And therefore does not entertain such a "voice."

Indications for Change Needed and Survey Results

The surveys indicate that only some of this material was new to these women. These women were familiar with the stories and characters highlighted in the presentation, but the new concepts would take time to absorb. In some cases, the women might not have been aware of an opposing doctrine. Therefore, in teaching this material the next time, the thesis writer would choose to show first the traditional teachings, and the hierarchical and patriarchal beliefs and actions that result from them. Then she would show how Scripture refutes these traditional teachings. The rationale for this is that some believers may not be aware of parallel interpretations of the same passages. Thus, they have not had the opportunity to research the biblical issues or even ponder the differing views. If both patriarchal and egalitarian perspectives of a passage are displayed, this will enlighten the audience and demonstrate the truth of Scripture. Another interesting addition would be the inclusion of stories of well-known Christian leaders who have changed their mind about women's roles.

The written survey results show that in two of the five areas half the participants claimed that the material was new or mostly new: Women in the Old Testament and

Women in the New Testament. Forty percent claimed that the material from the section called Jesus and the Gospels was new or mostly new; and thirty percent made the same claim for the Creation Narrative and Kingdom Building segments. The other responses indicate that for fifty percent of the women, there was nothing new or not much new in the areas of the Creation Narrative and Women in the Old Testament, while forty percent of the respondents indicated the same for Kingdom Building. The other responses fell in the category of Neutral, and on some surveys questions were left unanswered.

Obstacles

A few obstacles in teaching this material include the short time span and the amount of material to cover. These obstacles can be seen first from the teacher's point of view, and then from the learner's perspective.

The writer has spent decades delving into this issue and untold hours reading, writing and researching on the topic of women. The presentation merely highlighted some of the major findings and Scripture passages which have led to these conclusions. It is challenging to teach the key concepts in one morning, and impossible to cover the entire sweep of history and theology. Through informal follow-up discussions with a few participants, it is clear that the goal must be to shed light on a new perspective for the participants. In so doing, it is possible to whet their appetite so that they want to study the issue more on their own.

Regarding the learner's perspective, another obstacle surfaced. While it is necessary to be open to learning from respected theologians or Christian leaders and

teachers, to consider a new teaching, a woman must also be willing to listen to options other than the traditions espoused in her own ecclesial circles. As indicated above, much more time is needed not only to teach, but also to think on such a weighty topic that may create a meaningful paradigm shift in the life of the learner.

Furthermore, human beings may be reluctant to change unless there is a felt need or a concrete benefit in doing so. If the community around them does not support this change, there is even more hesitation to consider new ideas. The goal of helping women see themselves in a more positive light will be accomplished only (if at all) over time and with more input and interaction.

Outlook

Several areas stand out that still need to be addressed: 1) dealing with a true injustice versus a selfish desire; 2) the issue of marital status; 3) one's geographical background; and 4) the mindset and education of the younger generation.

It is difficult to know when one should fight for something, especially when she suspects it is for selfish reasons. On the other hand, God calls Christians to fight for justice. Therefore, a woman choosing to go forward and fight against patriarchy must be sure of her cause; otherwise she may retreat from the battle, choosing instead to take comfort in God's sovereignty.

One's marital status played a role in the discussion and should be studied, and what effects it has on one's position towards complementarianism or egalitarianism. The singles' population in the United States is increasing in number, and this will affect the culture of American churches profoundly. Many women are delaying marriage or

remaining single for life.¹ This may affect their desire and availability for vocational work in the church. It will also be beneficial to note if this growing trend affects the policies of patriarchal denominations. Research which delves into how the traditional churches address contemporary changes will be of great value.

Considering where a person lives within this country also makes a difference, because in the USA, the South (where this project was carried out) is typically much more conservative in values than in the North or the West. This is not only anecdotal and popular belief, but also documented and substantiated by research. "It is widely believed that gender role attitudes are more traditional in the southern United States than elsewhere in the nation." ² Therefore, a woman raised in the South and continuing to live there is surrounded by patriarchal expectations, explicit and implicit.

Regarding age and the younger generation, the oldest participants did not indicate a change in thinking. The younger generation is, as to be expected, much less traditional than the older half of these participants. The younger generation may not accept long-held traditional teaching of Scripture without question. Because this population is also increasingly single, many of the patriarchal assumptions of the church will not be relevant to these young women. Also, the younger participants in the study

¹ Arlene Saluter, "Singleness in America [PDF - 10M]," *Studies in Marriage and the Family* (P23-162: Published 1989), *United States Census Bureau*, accessed September 4, 2016, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/marriage/data/cps/>.

² Tom W. Rice and Diane L. Coates, "Gender Role Attitudes in the Southern United States," abstract, *Gender and Society* 9, no. 6 (1995): 744-56, accessed September 28, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/189539>.

will want to find out if the complementarian traditions are not merely proper standards to live by, but they will want to know if they work out practically.

Furthermore, the female population in this country is bypassing their male counterpart in pursuing higher education.³ It remains to be seen if these factors will influence the hierarchical structure in the traditional denominations.

The presentation produced rich discussion on the topic of women. The audience on the whole demonstrated an interest in investigating this topic on a deeper level. Whether young or old, the participants were engaged in the discussion and all made valuable contributions. The thesis writer intends to continue to delve into this topic, hoping to help women improve their self-concept through the study of Scripture.

An Observation

The writer of this thesis set out to help women develop a positive self-concept. Through her project, she attempted to make a difference in the life of these participants by highlighting the Scriptural truths about women. Yet, these Biblical passages and the impact they have on a woman are but pieces in a much larger puzzle that makes up a Christian woman's identity. Other contributing factors include: her family background, education, career, relational dynamics with family members, friends, peers, co-workers, church friends, church leaders, acquaintances and the community. Although the topic of self-concept was not overtly discussed the morning of the project, in reality it was

³ "More Working Women Than Men Have College Degrees, Census Bureau Reports," *United States Census Bureau*, April 26, 2011, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/education/cb11-72.html>.

underlying much of the discussion in regard to the roles a woman is gifted for and which roles she is allowed to carry out in the church.

Whether a woman is content or struggling with the status quo, but she may not be ready to tackle a truly transformative change. Or she may choose to compartmentalize church as just one arena of her life where her expectations are not met. She may choose to accept the limitations on her voice, intellect and roles in a patriarchal setting, and be satisfied until the need arises to engage in change.

Small steps of change, one at a time, can lead up to a significant transformation in a woman's sense of worth. One morning in a church conference room watching a Power Point presentation (and then discussing it) can be one of those small steps. Perhaps, through the teaching that day, a seed was planted in each of these participants who are still involved in patriarchal settings. For those women who have already begun to embrace egalitarianism, perhaps the seed was fertilized and watered by the information given in the project.

As each participant continues to contemplate God's design for the woman (made *Imago Dei*), God's designation of female leaders (throughout Scripture), and God's direction for the body of Christ (the Blessed Alliance between men and women as kingdom builders), it is the hope of the thesis writer that each woman will indeed begin to develop a stronger sense of self and confidently embrace her identity as an *ezer-warrior*.

APPENDIX A

POWER POINT PRESENTATION

~ Introduce yourselves ~

I am grateful for your presence and for your willingness to participate in my Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Doctorate of Ministry Thesis Project.

I have a high view of Scripture, and I pray that this presentation will enlighten you and give you hope for your future as a Christian woman.


Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose.

In you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 15:13


May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen



Who are you? How were you created? What is your identity?

- Identity is what defines you. It's where you find your value, the very essence of your worth. It's a concrete state of being. It is not a passing quality or characteristic, but rather, identity is who you will always be.
 - Neither is it a role that you fulfill in life. Roles come and go. Your identity is WHO YOU ARE.
 - My objective in this project is to contribute to a stronger and more positive identity for you as a Christian woman.
-

- 
- "Who tells us who we are? Who alone has the right to define our worth? Are we at the mercy of gender, culture, circumstances, and fear? Or is there a Voice that trumps all others to give us an indestructible identity and rich, durable kingdom purposes for our lives?"
 - The **1st** thing God says about us is: *WE ARE MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE.*
 - Both male AND female reflect the image of God. We are created to be like God and to reflect God.
-

The Creation Narrative

Genesis 1: 26-28

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move on the earth."

²⁷ God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground." (New English Translation)

Genesis 1-2:

We begin with togetherness in loving connection, imaging God in whose image we are made.

Genesis 1:26-28 shows us the Triune God creating male and female in the divine image and giving both two commands:

1) be fruitful and fill the earth, and 2) have dominion over every living thing on the earth.

Both commands came to both the man and woman: both are to be engaged in parenting and in dominion.



The LORD God said . . .

"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper [ezer] suitable for him."

—Genesis 2:18, 20



Ezer = “strong helper”

- 21 X in the Old Testament

- 2 X → woman
- 3 X → nations
- 16X → God!

- “warrior”

עֶזֶר (ezer) — 21 Occurrences

Genesis 2:18

HEB: אֶזְרָא לִי עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדִי

NAS: I will make him a helper suitable

KJV: alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

INT: to be alone will make A helper suitable

Psalm 70:5

HEB: חֲשָׁה לִי עֶזְרִי וּמַצִּילִי אֵלֶּה

NAS: to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer;

KJV: unto me, O God: thou [art] my help and my deliverer;

INT: God Hasten are my help and my deliverer
O

Psalm 121:2

HEB: עֶזְרִי מִיְיָ יְהוָה

NAS: My help [comes] from the LORD,

KJV: My help [cometh] from the LORD,


INT: my help from the LORD

Englishman's Concordance Strong's
Hebrew: 5828

Bible Hub, Accessed October 25, 2014

Philip Payne put it this way:

“The noun used here [ezer] throughout the Old Testament does not suggest ‘helper’ as in ‘servant,’ but ‘help, savior, rescuer, protector’ as in ‘God is our help.’ In no other occurrence in the Old Testament does this refer to an inferior, but always to a superior or an equal.... ‘help’ expresses that woman is a help/strength who rescues or saves man.”

- 
- The ezer is a warrior...The ezer never sheds her image-bearer identity...God defines who she is and how she is to live in this world. That never changes.
 - The image-bearer responsibilities to reflect God to the world and to rule and subdue on his behalf still rest on her shoulders too."
-



WHO DID GOD CREATE YOU TO BE?

Women in the Old Testament:

Prophets
and
Prostitutes



Women Prophets

- **Miriam:** courageous to approach Pharaoh's daughter; leads praise & worship after Red Sea crossing; Miriam is named w/Moses & Aaron
- She is punished w/leprosy (Num. 12), which shows that she was important & powerful (entire camp had to stay w/her)
- **Huldah:** a remarkable woman in 2 Kings 22
- She is consulted by Hilkiah the priest and the rest of the king's counselors.

Exodus 15:20-21:

Then **Miriam**, the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine and led all the women as they played their tambourines and danced. And Miriam sang this song:

"Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; he has hurled both horse and rider into the sea."

Micah 6:4:

For I brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from slavery. I sent Moses, Aaron, and **Miriam** to help you.

Miriam misused her spiritual gift of prophecy

- She was more than just a sister of 2 famous brothers; she was part of the team.
- She & Aaron complained that Moses had a Cushite wife. (Numbers 12.1-2)
- Because of their jealousy of Moses, Miriam was stricken with leprosy (& not Aaron).
- She was the stronger person; she deserved a stronger punishment.
- And for 7 days all of God's people had to wait for her return to camp. She must have been a significant leader to halt the journey of all Israel.

Huldah, the “prophetess”

- Is God forced to use women only when no men are available?
- There were male prophets in Jerusalem, but God had given a special spiritual gift to the woman **Huldah**, & he used her to speak his message both to the high priest and to the king.
- Her message was from the Lord, the God of Israel. She knew she was God's spokesperson.

2 Kings 22

- ¹⁵ And she said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: ...”
- She spoke strongly, decisively, and to the point. She simply used her gift.
- The high priest Hilkiah and the rest of the crowd from the palace also knew she was speaking for God. They took her message back to the king.
- She was a woman of distinction who used her God-given spiritual gift for the benefit of a nation.

Rahab: from Prostitute to Profound Faith

- **Joshua 2:1** And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was **Rahab** and lodged there.
- **Rahab** made a courageous decision to hide the spies.

from Prostitute ...towards Profound Faith

- **Joshua 2:11** And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.
- Because of her conviction, **Rahab** dared to stand alone against her culture because she had a strong faith in Israel's God.

She makes the roll-call of the faithful in Hebrews 11!

- **Hebrews 11:31** By faith **Rahab** the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.
- BUT THAT'S NOT ALL...
- **Matthew 1:5** and Salmon the father of Boaz by **Rahab**, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,

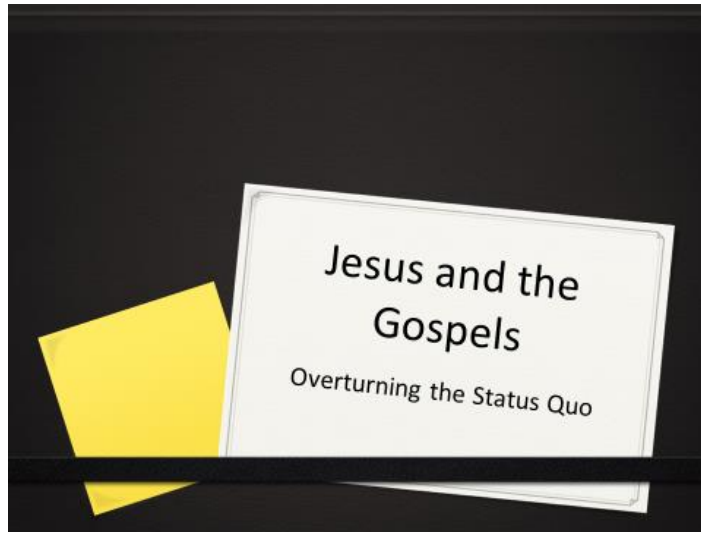
Ancestor in the genealogy of Jesus???

- Mother of Boaz
- Great-great-grandmother of David, Israel's greatest king
- In the lineage of Jesus, the Lord of Glory the God-man, the Savior of the world
- **Rahab**, the prostitute?
- Wouldn't you think God would be a bit choosier about the lineage of His Son?

What can we learn from this?

- Never mind what Rahab was → God looked at what she could become.
- It is the same for us. Our past is irrelevant. Our future matters to God. Faith can blossom in any environment.
- What Rahab had been was irrelevant.
- What she became through active faith was all that mattered.

What can you learn from these women used by God?



Compared to other literary works from the first century, the gospels have a relatively high number of references to **women**.

What is even more remarkable is that in Jesus' actions, there is not a single case in which a **woman** is put down, reproached, humiliated or cast into one of the lewd stereotypes of that day.



Unlike other Jewish men, Jesus spoke freely to **women** in public; he taught them theology; he had women as disciples or followers. He made clear that **women** would be active participants in the work of his kingdom. **Women** traveled with Jesus and even supported him financially. (Luke 8.1-3)

He took firmly counter-cultural stands on many issues because his mission was to oppose all that violated the will of God.



The technical term denoting *discipleship* in the gospels was “following Jesus.” In all four gospels we find **women** as well as men following him throughout Galilee and back and forth to Jerusalem for the various feasts (Luke 8:1-3, Matthew 27:55, Mark 15:41).

Jesus scandalized the religious leaders of his day (and even his disciples at times) by his inclusion of **women** among those who followed him.



We know that all of the Twelve were men, and some have concluded, therefore, that only men should serve in ministry positions.

But all Twelve were also Jews.

If gender excluded **women** from ministry, one could argue that race should also exclude Gentiles from ministry positions.

But the church that began as exclusively Jewish rapidly expanded to include non-Jewish leaders.



As we look at these and other **women** in the gospels, we note that they are presented in a positive light: no **woman** is shown resisting Jesus' initiative, failing to believe him, deserting him or betraying him.

This is in sharp contrast to the way John presented men in his gospel. Even among the Twelve were evidences of hypocrisy (Jn 12:4-6), vanity (13:37), fickleness (13:38, 16:31-32), obtuseness (3:10, 16:18), deliberate unbelief (9:24-25), and thorough evil (13:2, 27-30).



Note how **God privileged women by being the first...**

- o 1st news of the incarnation---Luke 1.32-35 *Mary*
- o 1st miracle given to a bride at a wedding John 2
- o 1st Samaritan convert John 4
- o 1st Gentile convert Matthew 15
- o 1st resurrection teaching John 11 *Martha*
- o 1st perception of cross Mark 14 *Mary of Bethany*
- o 1st to witness resurrection Mt. 28.9 & Jn. 20.16 *women disciples*
- o 1st witness to tell of resurrection Mt 28.10 & Jn. 20.18
- o *In fact, women were last at the cross and first at the tomb...*



Jesus and the Woman at the Well – John 4

- o ¹⁷ The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."
- o In the Jewish culture at this time a wife could be rejected by her husband for any minor thing that "displeased" him. Yet a woman in the 1st century could not compel her husband to give her a certificate of divorce so that she could remarry. She could be abandoned and find herself without financial support.
- o This lone woman may have struggled with that problem, and it was almost impossible to survive as a single woman at that time. She may have found herself forced to live with a man she was not free to marry.



Jesus' treatment of this first Samaritan convert

- o Jesus did not judge her. He didn't insult her. He simply verified that she had told the truth. Jesus tore away her mask and she faced herself as he saw her.
- o He gave her living water, and she was so effective at "preaching the good news" to her village that **"many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony."** (John 4.39)
- o We, too, take that first sip of supernatural living water when we take off our masks and acknowledge ourselves as we really are.
- o Jesus Christ knows us to the core and we are still accepted by God. That is life-changing, life-sustaining living water.



Mary Magdalene

- Despite the myth, nothing in Scripture says or even implies that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. (φ, *nada*, zilch)
- We **do** know that Jesus cast 7 demons out of her and that she was a permanent part of the group that traveled with him.
- AND on a bad Friday called *GOOD FRIDAY* Mary stayed at the cross long after the disciples fled.
- **Mary was sent by Jesus to be the 1st witness to the resurrection. He commissioned her (a woman) to tell his disciples (men) the good news. She became “an apostle to the apostles” (according to St. Augustine).**



Women in the Gospels – Remember:

- Jesus only had to spend a few minutes with the woman at the well; she 'got it' quicker than the disciples. And he taught her **BEFORE** any men in the village.
- This 1st Samaritan convert confessed and professed Christ's deity and **she preached and evangelized.**
- Mary Magdalene was mentioned 14 times in the gospels > more than any other woman. John 20. 1-18
- Mary Magdalene was the gospel-bearer to the gospel-bearers. The apostle to the apostles. Jesus told her to go and tell his brothers.
- Luke 8.1-3 Women disciples traveled with Jesus and supported him out of their means, which was highly unconventional.
- Martha made the same confession of Jesus as Messiah in John 11.27 as Peter did Matthew 16.16.
- Jesus was accused of many things, but **NOWHERE** was he ever accused of sexual misconduct with the women he interacted with.
- Women disciples did not abandon Jesus, as many of his male followers did.



- **Women** as well as men were disciples of the Savior when he walked the earth 2,000 years ago. They followed him, listened to him, learned from him, ministered to him.
- Mary Magdalene and the Samaritan woman at the well were transformed by meeting Jesus Christ, the Savior. How is Jesus Christ transforming you?
- He calls each of his sheep by name and he knows exactly what we need as we walk with him. How has the Master Teacher used experiences in your own life to encourage you and teach you to keep following him?



Women in the New Testament

~ a fresh new look at women's roles ~

Acts 1.14 → Women in the Upper Room await the promise of Pentecost

Acts 2.4 & 11 → Women participate with the Apostles in the public declaration of 'the wonders of God.'

Acts 21.9 & 1 Corinthians 11.5 → Women prophesy.

Acts 18.26 → A woman teaches a man theology (Priscilla teaching Apollos)

Acts 16.15 → Women host churches in their homes

Ken Stewart, Ph. D.
Biblical & Theological Studies Professor
Covenant College

Tabitha (Dorcas) –a humble seamstress? Acts 9.36

- Peter left Lydda at once to go to Joppa and raise her from the dead.
- "That the beneficiary of this unprecedented event in the life of the church was a female leader should give us reason to pause. Her leadership was important enough to the church for it to send two men on a mission to fetch Peter, for Peter to interrupt a successful evangelistic campaign (v. 35) and return with them for the funeral of a woman he did not know, and for Peter to decide that the only solution to the crisis created by her death was to bring her back to life.
- Some leader she must have been, Tabitha."

Beyond Sex Roles
Bilezikian

Phoebe as deacon (Romans 16.1)

The apostle Paul used *diakonos* to describe his own ministry (Ephesians 3:7, Colossians 1:23) and that of four other people with whom he had worked:

- 1-Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7)
- 2-Epaphras (Colossians 1:7)
- 3-Timothy (1 Thessalonians 3:2, 1 Timothy 4:6)
- 4-Phoebe (Romans 16:1)

The King James translators chose to translate *diakonos* as *minister* for each of the four men but to translate it as *servant* in Phoebe's case.

Phoebe (Romans 16.2)

Phoebe as *prostatis*

Again translators backed away from the meaning of this Greek word, saying that she was "a great help" or "a patron of many" or a "benefactor of many" or "a succourer of many."

But Thayer's lexicon tells us that the first meaning of the word is "a woman set over others."

It is the feminine form of a noun designating a leader. In the early 2nd century, Justin Martyr used the masculine form, *prostates* to describe "the president or presiding officer of a local church," one who "preaches, teaches, presides at the Lord's table."

Women as "hard workers in the Lord" (Romans 16:6, 12)

4 women are singled out as "hard workers" (*polla ekopiasen*) or as "hard workers in the Lord" (*kopiasas en kurio*):

- 1) Mary
- 2) Tryphena
- 3) Tryphosa
- 4) Persis

Paul used **the same word** to describe his own work of **preaching and evangelism** in 1 Timothy 5:17 (*kopiontes*).

Women as “fellow workers”

- The Greek word *sunergon* (translated “fellow workers”) always designated those who were prominent in ministry in the Pauline churches. Paul used it to describe ten people:
 - Philemon (Philemon 1:1)
 - Timothy (1 Thessalonians 3:2)
 - Aristarchus, Mary and Justus (Colossians 4:11)
 - Titus (2 Corinthians 8:23)
 - Euodia and Syntychē (Philippians 4:2-3)
 - Priscilla and Aquila (Romans 16:3)
 - Note that 4 of these 10 people were women.

Junia, female apostle? (or Junias, male?) (Romans 16.7)

- Verse 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia ...They are highly respected among the apostles.
- The early Church Fathers (Chrysostom, Origen, Jerome) assumed that Junia was a woman.
- Chrysostom wrote, “*O how great is the devotion of this woman that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!*”

Later the name was changed to Junias, sounding more like a man’s name. Your Bible probably shows this footnote.

For the most part, traditional scholars have now conceded that Junia was a woman, but they suggest that it merely means that she was “admired by or well-known to the apostles, but not prominent among the apostles.”

However, to support that interpretation it is necessary to use different Greek prepositions (*para* or *pros*). But the Greek text uses *en* with the plural which always has the sense of *within* or *among* the apostles.

Women as Prophets

- Acts 21:9 tells us that the four daughters of Philip were all recognized as prophets.
- In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul laid down a dress code for women exercising a prophetic ministry in public worship.
- In 1 Corinthians 14:3 Paul defined the New Testament prophetic ministry as "speaking to men and women for their edification, exhortation, and comfort."

The priesthood of ALL believers

- **1 Peter 2:9** ... for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.
- **Galatians 3:28** There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, **male and female**. For you are all **one in Christ Jesus**.
- If there is no discrimination upon entering the church or Kingdom of God, why change the rules after you enter?

John 8:32

And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Kingdom Building

◎The Blessed Alliance

- God never envisioned a world where his image bearers would do life in low gear or be encouraged to hold back, especially when suffering is rampant, people are lost, and there is so much kingdom work to do.
- He wants his daughters to thrive, mature, gain wisdom, hone their gifts, and contribute to his vast purposes in our world.

Half the Church:
Recapturing God's Global Vision for Women
by Carolyn Custis James

- "I grieve that far too many women and girls are living with small visions of themselves and of their purpose.
- "One can't simply learn the truth and sit on it. Truth not only changes how we see ourselves, it changes what we do and how we live.
- "...what message are we sending to the world by how we value and mobilize our own daughters? Will the whole church openly benefit from women's gifts and contributions, or will the body of Christ attempt to fulfill a mission that dwarfs our resources without the full participation of half the church? What is it costing us when half the church's gifts go untapped?"

Half the Church:
Recapturing God's Global Vision for Women
by Carolyn Custis James

"A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY"

"This is a moment of unprecedented opportunity for the church...This is a golden opportunity to restore to women the indestructible and elevated identity that they have inherited as God's daughters and that a fallen world has stolen from them..."

*Half the Church:
Recapturing God's Global Vision for Women
by Carolyn Custis James*

- ❑ Our church community here on earth should at least try to resemble the heavenly one to come, where men and women are both respected and given equal value. To govern a church by only half of God's image speaking into the issues is ignoring half of the body of Christ and is weak at best.
- ❑ "Christ's community is to be not only the sign but also the foretaste of the future reality that God is bringing to pass.
- ❑ "In short, if we are to be the foretaste of God's eschatological community, we must welcome the contributions of both male and female in the church."

*Women in the Church:
A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry
by Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo*

- ⦿ "However, let ministry be recognized not as the privileged purview of the few but as the divine call for all to invest themselves fully and joyfully in the work of the kingdom, and watch community flourish and expand irrepressibly.
- ⦿ Watch community take on the powers of hell; subdue the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this dark world, and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms; and bring them bound and screaming for mercy under the transcendental, heaven-and-earth sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ."

*Community 101: Reclaiming the Local Church as
Community of Oneness
by Gilbert Bilezikian
p. 186*

~ Closing and "Ευχαριστώ" ~

- ❖ Thank you for being present and participating today.
- ❖ Thank you, Prayer Supporters!

• **Hebrews 13:20-21 *Benediction and Final Greetings***

- ²⁰ Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,²¹ equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

APPENDIX B
HANDOUT FOR NOTE-TAKING

The Creation Narrative

Genesis 1: 26-28

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move on the earth."

²⁷ God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground." (New English Translation)

Women in the Old Testament:

Prophets
and
Prostitutes

Jesus and the Gospels

Overturning the Status Quo

Women in the New Testament

~ a fresh new look at women's roles ~

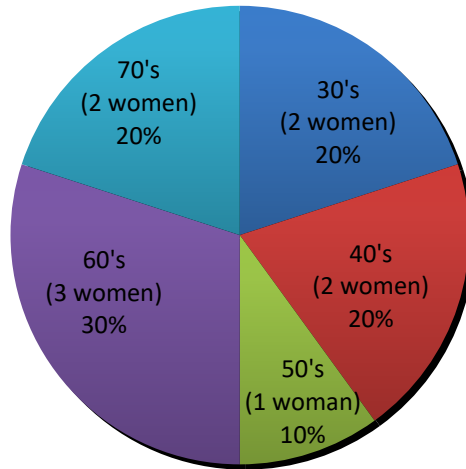
Kingdom Building

• The Blessed Alliance

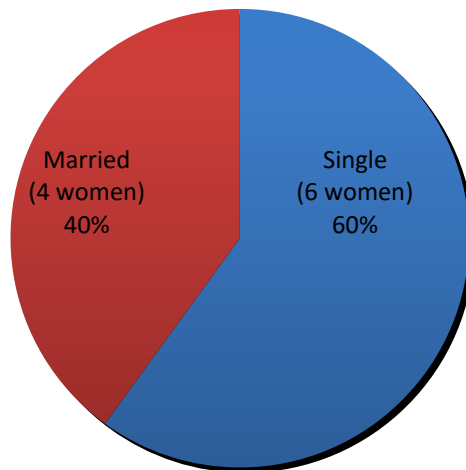
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

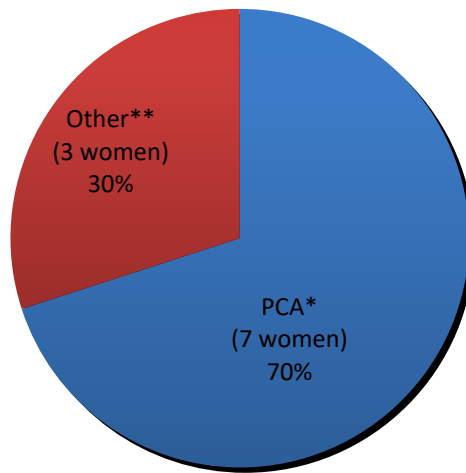
Participants by Age Range



Participants by Marital Status



Participants by Denomination

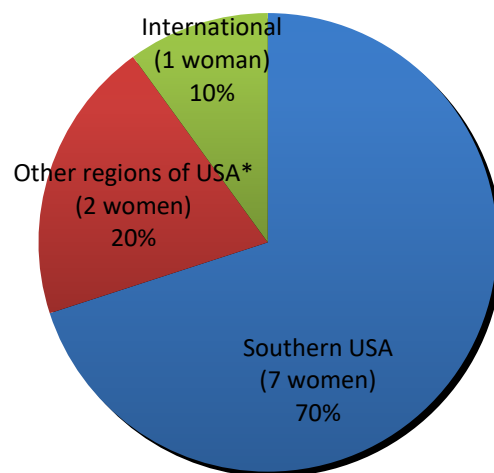


*PCA = Presbyterian Church in America

**Other = Episcopal, Methodist, Inter-denominational

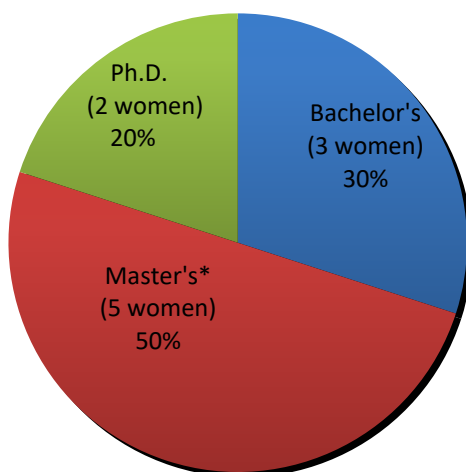
Note: 90% formerly or currently affiliated with PCA (9 women)

Participants by Geographic Location



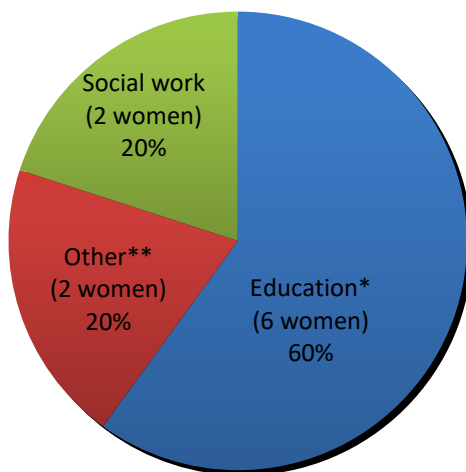
*North, Midwest

Participants by Education



*1 seminary degree

Participants by Profession



*Current or retired

**Christian work, missions

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED DISCUSSION

D: Writer of thesis

P: Participant

1-The Creation Narrative

P: (slightly inaudible question about use of *ezer* meaning woman)

D: It said two times it's used in the Old Testament; the other times it's the nations or God.

P: Only two for female role.

D: That's my understanding.

P: When you were saying that Helper means – some other words for that – saving, rescuing man – it made me think of comments I've heard from elementary school teachers. That if they had a class full of boys, nothing would get accomplished. But having girls in the classroom rescues the situation so that they socialize the boys and keep them under some sort of control so that learning actually takes place. That just connected to me.

D: That's great...

P: I had a comment: As warrior, strong helper, protector, in that the male is (fades out).

P: One comment on that and I don't fully understand, but the modern sort of male / female roles in conservative – I may not even be using the right word – I wonder... that makes me want to think about that some more, and to go and listen to them and read the book to see what is **their** view of woman. Because I think what I mostly remember is the woman is the receiver, and not the initiator of things, relationships, and others, and this is interesting.

P: (inaudible question about being made in the image of God)

D: I didn't put this in, but there are instances in Scripture where God is referred to like a mother. I had seen Scripture because I had certainly read the Bible all the way through more than once, but they really came to light through my Gordon-Conwell courses...

P: (inaudible mention of Proverbs 31 woman)

D: And that woman is, I believe *gael* in Hebrew; she is a **strong** woman. So let's go to the other women in the Old Testament.

2-Women in the Old Testament

P: Do you think based on this – your comment – that Huldah correctly responded? And there's – I think there's just that brief passage in Kings, right, about her? I don't remember any other passage...

D: Yeah, I think you're right.

P: ... and never mentioned again... Miriam – is she mentioned again?

D: Let's ask the Bible teachers.

P: Her connection to Moses of course is described. I wondered if New Testament mentioned Miriam?

P: The New Testament, I don't know.

P: And Rahab and the other women in Jesus' lineage is faith that kind of landed them in it too, I think. A common denominator? I just was struck by your comment.

D: I will say this... in Hebrews 11, like if we're wondering why Miriam or Huldah wasn't mentioned again, it does say in Hebrews 11 – after the verse, "And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah..." you know... "Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others..."

So not everyone gets named again...I wasn't thinking that the way I did it. I was just more thinking: Look at Huldah. There were men they could have gone to, and they consulted **her** and received her words. I just **love** that about Rahab. That she's the ancestor of Jesus! And have I ever heard a sermon on that? No, but my Gospels professor, Al Mawhinney, he did talk about the women mentioned in Matthew's genealogy. 4 out of 5 Gentiles, maybe?

P: It's 4, I believe.

D: OK. Any more comments or questions?

P: That was just a reminder to me... the message we get is that women are easily deceived, they will cause men to stumble, they're fickle, and ... inaudible... she is favored, there is safety, and there is respect and there's mystery...

D: And saved in childbearing could be that that is who Jesus will come from and that is our Savior...

P: I don't think it is [recording]. [We had technical difficulties.]

P: I was just wondering about what we respond to one who says that...

P: He didn't use her husband; he used her.

P: I just have a thought that is not related to the Old Testament, but it came from my background of growing up in an environment where there are many different kind of people group, and different levels – would you say - levels of historical development. In the sense that, I grew up in an environment where there are tribal people from very kind of primitive sort of background, as well as very sophisticated, you know, people in the twentieth century with their doctor degrees and so on.

And I have been able to see the role that women play in primitive societies, and they're just indispensable to the life of the community. You know, they do everything that men do, plus raising kids and making things like clothes, cloths; they weave. They do everything! So they're very intricately involved in the life of the society / community and I think that's more like the society that's been talked about in the Old Testament, where, you know, women are just... they're helpers, but they're mutual helpers, male and female... are both needed in the life of the community.

And so I think this idea that women are the weaker sex who are less involved in tough things that need to be done in the community... is more maybe a product of the Industrial Revolution and comes more from the West.

P: It's even older than that.

P: From my research it's from way longer than the Industrial Revolution. The Greeks had a very low opinion of women. And their civilization was very advanced with arts and ... so they were no longer in the kind of tribal work that you were talking about. And at that point the intellectual abilities were advancing and they started diminishing perhaps women's roles because they were not reliant on some of that labor you were talking about.

P: Well, in Old Testament times, in New Testament times, Pharaohs, excuse me, Pharisees would not speak to a woman, right? I mean, any time the culture got developed, the women were diminished, I think. But in primitive societies you can't get away with that. You need to have everybody contributing to survive.

P: Yeah. So there's a kind of hierarchy, a social hierarchy that develops in a more... as civilization advances. So the women's hard labor is diminished and in some ways that's good for the women. You know, it makes their life easier, but at the same time it kind of pushes them out, off the central corridor where important work is done.

So in some ways you might say that the Industrial Revolution helps to make women's role / life better, in a sense that we're not subject to having to do very difficult, heavy tasks, but then it takes us out of the mainstream way... I think it maybe moves us into the role of maybe more thinkers and less, you know, the heavy labor. But then in our modern society, heavy labor has been taken over by machines, so...

Anyway it's just that there is the social and historical development aspect to this situation – to this men's and women's roles.

P: And the question is: Who gets educated, you know, in that civilized society? Education has been withheld from women, and you know, they weren't able to be educated in the Old Testament and in New Testament times. And we have in Pakistan, you know, girls can't be educated, and Malawi is working on that, and so I think... that's... once we...women being educated is a threat to...

D: That is a great segue into "Jesus and the Gospels."

P: So maybe you're going to touch on this, De De, but I'm wondering if the passage about women's not teaching a man – was it because women weren't afforded the opportunity to have more education, where maybe some of those women were thinking, "Oh well, I'm part of the Christian community now; I can say something. But because they hadn't been formally educated, they were looked down on (?)"

D: Yes, that's the section after this one. Stay tuned! This is just the Gospels, and then we'll break. And then we'll go into the New Testament.

3-Jesus and the Gospels

P: And maybe I missed it, but somebody pointed this out, and I can't think of anything... the Samaritan woman was also the first person that Jesus revealed that he was the Messiah to. I thought that was neat. I mean not a Jew, not a man, I mean, not an upstanding member of the community. She was ready for it, and I guess, up until then, nobody else was.

D: I just... I had always heard Jesus' comment to her was like pointing the finger: *And you are living with a man*. But I got that information from my professor's book, Alice Mathews, explaining the culture and the customs of the day. Maybe the ex-husband hadn't given her the certificate of divorce to free her. Life was not like it is here, you know, she could have starved to death without having a man to live with. So, that's something I really liked about...

P: I think we can't always judge people by the circumstances we find them in because they could be there by some misfortunate path that involves no immoral... Tamar in the Old Testament... I was thinking of her too when you mentioned Rahab.

P: I never saw Jesus' comment to her as condemnation to her, but more that he was revealing to her that he knows everything about her, that he knows her heart. Speaking to her not only as a woman, but as a Samaritan woman, makes it even more amazing. She doesn't feel condemnation from him or she wouldn't have responded in the way that she did. But he knows her heart, but she also understood that maybe he was not condoning what she was doing, but that he was not condemning her either.

P: The woman with an issue of blood did not feel restrained from touching Jesus either.

D: She was bold! Because the laws would have said she was unclean, right? When she touched his garments, was that still enough to make him unclean, according to the Law?

P: Mmm hmm. Yeah.

P: Not only the issue of blood, but as a woman.

D: What is interesting to me is you all have pointed out different aspects of these women, but also more women that are in Scripture that have made such an impact.

P: Yes, when you think of the story of Martha and Mary, but Mary is sitting at his feet, and he never tells her to leave; she has chosen the good things. So again, his inclusion, and acceptance of women.

D: Yes one main point of that story is that he's saying, "Let her learn." And we learn so we can teach others.

P: And being anointed by a woman, and saying, "She has done a good thing for me, and as long as this story is told, she will be remembered."

P: He honored that, and everybody else was doing the opposite.

D: Well, yeah, and like I said, so much of this section came from my professor's book: *A Woman Jesus Can Teach*, subtitle is: *New Testament Women Help You Make Today's Choices* by Alice Mathews. And I just really appreciated her teaching. And then she also has one: *A Woman God Can Use: Old Testament Women Help You Make Today's Choices*. These would make great Bible studies.

P: Could you send your bibliography?

D: I could.

P: I would like that.

D: I might need a reminder.

P: We could just copy the book titles off the table.

D: Yes, and I didn't put them on slides, like, a lot of this material did come from her, but I didn't want to distract you. But a lot of this too came from my actual courses at Gordon-Conwell from Alice and her daughter Karen Mason. So, I've sent some of you before my reading list – I could just send my reading list.

P: *(inaudible)*

D: Yes, and I can do all of them; every year for our residency we got a new reading list. The second residency was the one that dealt mostly with this... Let's take a ten-minute break and get refreshed and...

4-Women in the New Testament

P: ...this comment about what you just talked about - the learning in silence. Difficult passages like that I like to take everything from the Bible and try to understand it, but I also like to throw in what I observe of human nature and real life. And that's one passage that I have struggled with because it seems so oppressive and unfair. And I've come to realize from the years I've done Bible studies, you know I've done different: co-ed, male (maybe I was the only female there or something like that), and then Bible Study Fellowship, which is all women, and incredibly disciplined. And comparing Bible Study Fellowship to a lot of the mostly women or all female groups I've been in, I think there is a tendency in the non-BSF groups to get off track, to not finish the discussion. And maybe that's human nature or maybe it's more of a "women" issue than "men" - I don't know. I kind of think it might be, but women with... BSF is the best Bible study - you can't expect me to come anywhere without boasting... - the best I have ever been in. Maybe you would agree, but it's because of the discipline that is over it. We always get through, and we always... I have learned more there than... even in Covenant classes, which I've only taken one, but a Bible class. So women can do it, but there's this other factor of self-discipline, that - I don't know - you need to get that in yourself too. But I am just not satisfied anymore with Bible studies where we don't get it done, or we don't go deep like BSF does, and...

D: Are you thinking that verse relates somehow to that idea of the discipline?

P: Yes.

D: And I think - I don't know a lot about the history, per se, but women were not allowed to learn, right? Not allowed to study the Bible. So...

P: The boys would have been taught things from the Hebrew Scriptures or the Israelite, Jewish Scriptures. They went to school, but girls did not. Or maybe they only went a little bit. They got taught at home, I think, was what it was.

P: Yes.

P: They didn't go to school.

P: Right, they didn't go to synagogue.

D: So they hadn't been in an education setting.

P: Right, and how much of how we learn to learn is because we grow up with the discipline of a classroom and...

P: And also during that time, in the Middle East, it was, and you know, you still hear it today, there was ululations *la la la la la*. You know, women would do that actually in... that was a part of culture and perhaps, you know, the women were doing that in the church, you know, because that's what they would do. They didn't have... well just reading about the context actually makes all the difference.

D: That's interesting.

P: And so Paul is giving instructions of, "This is the way to have effective communication and teaching." And so he's giving instructions to the men and he's giving instructions to the women and I think when he says, "Ask your husbands at home," he's actually making a way for them to be educated. Because in the culture men would not even bother talking – you know, instructing – their wife. So he's encouraging them, "Ask this question." And so the men hear, "Oh, you know, we're gonna' be encouraged to have intellectual conversations with our wives." You know, I mean, that's a big deal!

D: Yeah.

P: Yeah, good!

D: Feel free to comment on any other passages you think of in the New Testament.

P: Well, I also, would kind of like to comment – and this is obvious – looking at what God blesses and what bears fruit is another – God is sovereign. And BSF in fifty years, it started in the late 50's I think, mid-50's. Now more than a thousand classes around the world.

Men's classes – not because they... Well because they saw something good and they wanted in on it. But they have come in under the authority of the women who run BSF. And that's OK with them. They want the learning; they want the BSF program. And I don't think that men naturally understand that. I heard of a man who would like to be a part of a BSF class here – I don't want to mention names – but his kind of comment was, "Men don't need to be bothered with doing things women's way and we need to be about this."

But he didn't understand the BSF system and the discipline involved. And that's the key to it. That's what human nature needs to be able to grow in knowledge and experience of God. And if we try to do it another ungodly way we just don't get there. I think that's why God has blessed BSF.

P: Something in - actually the last section and the discussion- that is coming up for me is... feeling – I guess feeling angry and that this is... that I have this knowledge that Jesus and Paul were teaching equality. However, I don't really think it's effective to feel like... to have the anger and to go about it in a way that I feel like I've got to convince men. They just will automatically get defensive and get more dug in on the opposition, and

that's not a Christ-like way. I'm like self-aware. It doesn't feel good to have that anger and to feel like I've got to go about taking back or asking for the validation. For me it's really about... the way, you know, Mary is sitting at his feet... that I get my validation from Christ and to, to really, to claim it. It's there and I don't have to go to the man to say, "Look! Can I have it?" Like, it's there. Christ has already given it to me and that feels very whole and very loving and very supportive, and not angry and bitter and resentful that historically it's been this way and it's continuing, and "Why don't they understand?" It's more healing.

P: That's God's way. And what I'm contrasting with it is kind of man's way or woman's way. Certain women's thinking and movements current today are doing it that way, and they seem to me to be more unnatural, unrealistic, untruthful even, to keep their position. And I think you're right: that anger is feeding into that and it's dangerous, I believe.

D: Yeah, and it's dangerous, though if we are called... *[an aside to a particular participant: "Can I use you as an example, for what you do in your church?"]*... it's dangerous if we are called to do something, like [Participant's name] is called to teach Sunday School at her Methodist church. She teaches adult men and women. Her husband has chosen not to teach with her. She's got the gift; she's seminary-educated. But it's dangerous also to have that gift and not use it or for her to have it and for other people in different church settings to say, "Slam, no, you cannot use your God-given gift." That's just as dangerous, you know, if we know something, as in your case.

P: But is it the same sort of danger? I mean, if you have a gift and you want to use it, but cannot for the circumstances or whatever. There is a cost to you; you are robbed of something, but God knows that. You bear the loss, but I think God will make that up because he can do that and it seems consistent with his character.

D: Well, yeah, I'm saying, like if there's...

P: But it robs the church too because you should be using your gift to benefit the church and in that case if there are people who are obstructing that and preventing God's work from being done, I think it's dangerous for them.

D: That's the point I'm making.

P: My husband is so gracious as to say like the title of that book *Half the Church*. He says, "Why miss out on what God wants to say through people he's gifted? You know, why would you want to miss out on what God wants to say? "

P: It makes sense to us.

D: Well, like what [Participant's name] was saying just as Jesus says: In Christ – he has already given you your identity. This is what this book talks a lot about. My professor

suggested I do my project on showing Jesus' treatment of women and falling in love with Jesus all over again. But I had gleaned so much from the whole sweep of Scripture, and that's what I decided to do. And I thought too that I could have just focused on the New Testament passages about women in leadership roles – that I struggled with so much while I was at RTS – but I feel like I get... To me it is more holistic and more healing and therapeutic to see God's love for us. And Carolyn Custis James' book of – Wait a minute! God DOES have female in him: *male and female in his image we are created*. And that really struck me. So anyway I decided to do the whole sweep of Scripture and I hope it's effective to help you see your identity. And we have one last section ...

5-Kingdom Building

D: From Stanley Grenz and Gilbert Bilezikian I understood that in a governing body in church if only the male voice is allowed to speak, they're missing half of God's perspective because we are both made in God's image. So they helped me see that, and as my professor Alice says, this book by Gilbert Bilezikian – he was a Wheaton College professor and very pro-women's ordination – Chapter 3 of this book is worth its weight in gold. It is wonderful, and he's written many other good books. And this was an option – on one of my reading lists one year we had options, and I told Alice, "This should not be an option; this should be a MUST, a MUST-READ." So, and that's impressive to me – and he's retired now – but a very conservative school like Wheaton and... publishing and everything.

P: I have a comment. I wasn't quite sure when to make this, but maybe this is the best place, and this is just observation of the world.

D: Are you recording?

P: Yes. I have observed that there are a lot of men who don't – who view women leading in some respects as threatening. And I think that's just the fallen world that we live in. And I think that they can still be led by women, but... I don't think that my thinking is really devious – you just have to do it God's way. And in that case you can lead by following, by being behind. And that has been kind of my approach to leadership. And I think that that is godly in that it allows God the opportunity to open the door and if he really wants me out front, I will take it. You know, if a man doesn't step into it.

And I think that a lot of men recognize that there are capable, more capable women than they, and they will allow us. But I see that as kind of what's happened with BSF. That's led by a woman, and it has always been. And it's – she's done it God's way. Once I kind of saw that – and there are lots of – there's books written on this – I've heard people talking about it on the Janet Parshall Talk show – about women leading like this. And it was years ago, but I'm sure you could still find those resources. But that has given me some peace and I don't feel anger or dissatisfaction anymore because now I have put it in God's hands.

And I have seen a lot of doors closed for me that seemed to be opened to men just because they're men, and I'm not, and I have struggled with it – it's hard! (When you feel like you're just as gifted, but God gives it to somebody else.) But I'm putting my focus on God now, and I'm pursuing him; that's my main priority. And that has given me joy and peace, and gotten rid of the satisfaction of not getting the thing I was entitled to, or felt I was entitled to. Or maybe I was wrong about that too.

But it's a fallen world, and I think God can still bring beauty into this fallen world, but we have to do it his way, and I know that anger is not godly. I'm glad you used that word; 'cause I don't usually get angry. But I stuff it, and it's anger. So you called it, [Participant's name], so thank you.

P: I think of all down through history. Even though women have not been able to be in the forefront. They're like the rudder for their husband and kind of gently give their view, and many of their husbands are willing to consider it. I think of Sarah and Abraham, and he listened to Sarah. It was not always wise, as we find out, but I think of women as the rudder, just kind of guiding gently.

P: May I pick up on that? Sometimes you can just get tired of not being listened to. And you are right: I think that God gives us a wisdom. My husband is always asking me for more input, and I think that's the challenge – to not get tired of not being heard. That's our responsibility to God: to speak up with what he's given us. Sometimes I don't want to vote in our church elections. I don't feel like I know these men – I mean I'm not in Bible study with them like my husband is. So I'm tempted to just back out, but I don't think that's what God wants us to do.

D: Well, in a lot of my former church circles, I was told if women step up, then the men are just gonna' lay back, and not play out their goals. But that's not the case in our church here – men are taking part. We have a female rector: our pastor is a woman. There are men deacons and sub-deacons, well not deacons, but going in discernment for being deacons. They're in leadership roles. So, what I was told as a warning' "No, we can't do that because this is what the men will do" is not the case here. For what it's worth.

P: But a deacon in the PCA – at New City there are deaconesses. I'm sure you know that. And I think that's going to spread. Maybe slow.

D: But they're not ordained. Maybe they're commissioned or installed or something like that.

P: My thoughts lean more toward the historical-sociological side of this whole thing. And I'm thinking of society in which we live today in which the Church really doesn't play a major role at all. And so while women's roles in society in general have expanded a

great deal, it hasn't in the Church. And Christian women are able to express their talents and so on in society at large in a way that wasn't in Old Testament times.

And so I wonder if... So, this whole discussion about women in the church - Does it matter at all to the world (to which it's called to serve and to whom it's called to be an example to the world)? But the world doesn't really care what the Church has to say. And I don't think the Church plays much of a role in society in terms of setting example as to what men and women do or in terms of culture, you know, our contribution to the society at large.

And I was thinking about how, in a way, God intended the work of the Church to expand out of the Church into the world - to go from a Church as an institution, a worshipping institution to ...*[recording cut off]*

P: ... a lot to do with suffering and patience, and we don't understand that well in our theologies. And I think women get that. We are kind of weaker in many ways. We are stronger in many ways, but not in ways that the world values. And that makes us teachable, I think.

That's why Jesus taught so many women many profound things; they were teachable and the men were less. And it's still true today, and there are some real advantages in that – that you have the type of heart, as a woman, that can be more open to God if you let it. And, so, yeah, you have to balance these things between the world's way and God's way and that is really hard because it looks so attractive and fun. And yet this is where joy and peace is: God's way.

P: One of the things that I agree as far as sometimes we are limited as women. And we have to be careful that we don't want a certain position because our motives may be incorrect. But we have other opportunities too, like, I'm on the Mission Board at our church. And there are opportunities to teach and, like the circle. I mean, there are just so many places that the Lord can use us, even if the over-all Church says, "No, not this particular place." But he can use in other offices as well.

P: It's so important to try to have God's priorities, to see things through his eyes instead of what comes naturally. What comes naturally – is to look through the world's eyes. I walked away from the Church for a long time and I got used to looking at things that way. And I think that's why we have to make our priority God and learning about him. And find the place to do that. If it's not in your church, it might be in BSF. If you'd like to come to BSF, I'd love to invite you. And De De would too.

D: Yeah, I've never been in a Bible study so much in-depth in Scripture and with such good application to real life.

P: It doesn't stop at knowledge. It goes to changing your life.

D: And that was my testimony. At the end of every year BSF has a “Sharing Day.” And I said that I’ve been on the mission field, I’ve been in good in-depth Bible studies, I’ve been to seminary. And yet, I agree with [Participant’s name], I’ve never studied Scripture like I have with BSF, and really carried into my life. And it was begun by one woman from Texas years ago.

P: If you want to know about BSF, this is her autobiography *[pulls book out of her bag]*. I’m re-reading it for the third time. And there’s so much in here that’s so rich.

D: I’d like to read it.

P: Yeah, this is a great book.

D: Well, thank you all for coming... oh, yes, go for it.

P: I liked what you had to say about... I think you mentioned it and I know on the slides you mentioned it too in that daughters in the church and young women who are growing up in the church. And I’ve found that in my life, like this was not on my radar AT ALL until I was an adult.

And all of a sudden, I was like, “I’m not married!” And I’m still not married. And I’m still not married. How do I fit into the church if I’m supposed to be under the leadership of my husband and how does that work out? I can’t be a rudder to anyone; I’m just kind of floating around, doing whatever I’m doing.

And also just seeing that there’s a growing population of single women in the Church who are in that same boat. And also just teenage girls who are kind of growing up, getting told, “Well, someday you’ll be married and you’ll be a wife and you’ll have children.”

And yet I feel like that misses completely God’s view for women and that it’s so much more than that.

P: The Church doesn’t have a theology for suffering or for singleness that’s effective. It is a huge need.

P: But also just teaching women that it’s not about whether you’re married or single or anything. It’s about being made in God’s image and being used by God in the world.

P: Come to BSF and you’ll hear.

P: By the way, I’m single. So I’m not a rudder, but I have seen that, you know.

P: You know, in 1st Corinthians... Corinthians, when Paul is talking about, you know, if you’re not married...

APPENDIX E

WRITTEN SURVEY - BLANK

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

For each section of the presentation, indicate whether the teaching on that particular subject was new to you. Then below please provide comments to show how this might affect a woman's identity. Feel free to write on the back.

	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?					
	Comments:					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?					
	Comments:					
3-	Jesus & the Gospels?					
	Comments:					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?					
	Comments:					
5-	Kingdom Building?					
	Comments:					

APPENDIX F

WRITTEN SURVEY RESPONSES: TALLIED ANSWERS AND PERCENTAGES

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?	20%	10%	20%	40%	10%
	Comments:					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?	30%	20%	0%	20%	30%
	Comments:					
3-	Jesus & the Gospels?	10%	30%	10%	20%	30%
	Comments: (One participant answered twice and another did not answer this question.)					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?	20%	30%	0%	20%	20%
	Comments: (One participant answered twice and two did not answer this question.)					
5-	Kingdom Building?					
	Comments: (Two participants did not answer this question.)	10%	20%	10%	30%	10%

WRITTEN SURVEY RESPONSES

(Participants are identified by “P” and a number.)

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

P #1	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?	√				
	Comments: The word “ezer” can refer to humans and to God. Can mean helper and warrior.					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?	√				
	Comments:					
	1- Did not know about Huldah.					
	2- God doesn’t just use a woman when no man is available! (What does that imply about God?)					
3-	Jesus and the Gospels?	√				
	Comments: Uniqueness of woman at well.					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?	√				
	Comments:					
	Priscilla teaching Apollos. Phoebe being a deacon, but translated as “servant” in KJV. Junia an apostle. Read Bible (NT) thru lens of “no male nor female.”					
5-	Kingdom Building?	√				
	Comments: What’s it costing us when half the churches resources go untapped?! (C.C. James) Indeed! What does God think of that?! Bibliography / Reading List? ↓					
	De De’s presentation has presented a lot of material for further considering. Great job!					

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

P #2	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?					√
	Comments:					
	Women included in the narratives					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?					√
	Comments:					
	While God mostly used men in leadership roles, he did use women in situations in which they were leaders.					
3-	Jesus and the Gospels? Woman at the well (Participant answered twice.)				√	√
	Comments:					
	Women travelled with Jesus' ministry and ministered to Jesus. Jesus ministered to women Gentiles and Jews.					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament? (Participant answered twice.)				√	√
	Comments: Question: Would you say that women's roles in the 'church' have expanded from O.T. and N.T. times to today's role in spite of denominational restrictions?					
5-	Kingdom Building?					√
	Comments: Question: Women's physical presence vs. 'invisible' presence / contribution in church work.					
	The whole idea of the 'church' compared to the 'kingdom' could be investigated more.					

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

P #3	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?			√		
	Comments: The details were helpful to me in affirming the understanding of woman as ezer-warrior-strong-capable- rescuer.					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?	√				
	Comments: I think these OT stories parallel NT stories/truths about women of faith and the profound impact they can have on others' lives and nations. Most amazing is that both OT and NT women were considered nothing more than property and yet God uses them mightily despite their circumstances. This is an important affirmation for women: God can and will use us despite our circumstances.					
3-	Jesus and the Gospels?		√			
	Comments: It's tempting to think that, in response to this section, that women are the more faithful or more righteous (because women never resist Jesus' messages in the passages discussed). However, I think most important to consider the many layers of Jesus' countercultural response to women and what does that mean for me/us/women today?					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?		√			
	Comments: The presentation provides us, once again, with an understanding description of women's work in the historical church and how counter their work runs to how women in the conservative, evangelical are "permitted" to do (in terms of authority and voice.)					
5-	Kingdom Building? <i>(no answers or comments given)</i>					

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

P #4	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?	√				
	Comments:					
	"ezer" – helper → superior or equal → never inferior → strong; protector; warrior					
2-	Women in the Old Testament? Lives of Miriam, Huldah and Rahab	√				
	Comments:					
	My past (my short-comings, my down-falls) are irrelevant. God looks at what I can become through Him. My identity is in faith in Christ.					
3-	Jesus and the Gospels?		√			
	Comments:					
	This section also had information that could be expounded upon. It would be good to spend more time reviewing Scripture.					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?	√				
	Comments:					
	This section could be expounded upon. There was a lot of Scripture to review on women in the Bible.					
5-	Kingdom Building?			√		
	Comments:					

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

P #5	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?		√			
	Comments: Ezer as warrior, strong helper and protector is opposite from the male being rescuer/protector of the “weaker” sex.					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?		√			
	Comments: Women have been interpreted as being the “easily deceived” and who caused Adam to fall; however, Rahab shows woman is more than “the curse,” her faith led men to safety.					
	Makes me think of 1 Timothy of a woman redeemed by the childbearing – Christ’s lineage Eve – Rahab – but also their own virtue.					
3-	Jesus and the Gospels?		√			
	Comments: I see there are myths and assumptions in the interpretation of Bible (MM as prostitute and Samaritan woman living with a man who isn’t her husband).					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?		√			
	Comments: It’s meaningful to know that women had more roles in the church than now. NT teaches our radical community change as proposed by Jesus.					
5-	Kingdom Building?		√			
	Comments: Working with women and men for Christ can build our kingdom – we have to be able to have these discussions for change to occur.					

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

P #6	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?				√	
	Comments:					
	We are in God's image.					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?				√	
	Comments:					
	Miriam and Rahab stand out as leaders and courageous.					
3-	Jesus and the Gospels?				√	
	Comments:					
	Men and women followed Jesus. Mary was a gospel-bearer to the men gospel-bearers.					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?					
	Comments: <i>(no answers or comments given)</i>					
5-	Kingdom Building?				√	
	Comments:					
	Both male and female offers insight and gifts to the church.					

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

P #7	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?				√	
	Comments:					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?				√	
	Comments:					
	Does God value faith the most?					
	Women being educated?					
3-	Jesus and the Gospels?					
	Comments: <i>(no answers or comments given)</i>					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?					
	Comments: <i>(no answers or comments given)</i>					
5-	Kingdom Building?					
	Comments:					
	Women can lead in following.					

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

P #8	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?			√		
	Comments:					
	I haven't seen the Heb. word broken down before in how it is used in other places.					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?		√			
	Comments:					
	The thoughts on Miriam and Huldah were interesting.					
	Love how God calls warriors in complete disregard to social conventions.					
3-	Jesus and the Gospels?			√		
	Comments:					
	Loved your list of 1sts.					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?		√			
	Comments:					
	Loved this.					
5-	Kingdom Building?		√			
	Comments:					

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

P #9	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?				√	
	Comments:					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?					√
	Comments:					
	God is not a respecter [sic] of persons as is man. He chooses people (man or woman) that we might not even consider.					
3-	Jesus and the Gospels?					√
	Comments:					
	Women are not "2 nd class citizens" to Jesus.					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?					√
	Comments:					
5-	Kingdom Building?				√	
	Comments:					

A Fresh New Look at Fabulous Females

P #10	Is there anything new to you in this presentation regarding the passages in Scripture on...?	Yes	Mostly New	Neutral	Not Much New	No
1-	The Creation narrative?				√	
	Comments:					
	Both men and women are made in the image of God - equally!					
2-	Women in the Old Testament?					√
	Comments:					
	God can use any who are yielded to Him – despite their background or others’ opinions.					
3-	Jesus and the Gospels?					√
	Comments:					
	Jesus included and accepted women and did not condemn them.					
4-	Women or their roles in the New Testament?				√	
	Comments:					
	God can use any woman, anywhere if they are willing to be used.					
5-	Kingdom Building?				√	
	Comments: God can use men and <u>women</u> as He chooses, if we are willing, and in the way He chooses – when and where He chooses – His kingdom is what is important!					

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<i>Personal Profile</i>	Bilingual – Spanish and English Multicultural Experience Graduate Degrees Spanish, Linguistics; Bible, Ministry Professor/Teacher of Languages
<i>Education</i>	<i>Doctor of Ministry, “Effective Ministry to Women and Girls”</i> Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts 1 st residency June 2012 / anticipated graduation May 2017 <i>Master of Arts, Biblical Studies, Elective Courses: Biblical Languages</i> Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Florida <i>Master of Arts, Spanish; Minor: Linguistics; Bachelor of Arts, Spanish; Minor: International Affairs</i> Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida
<i>Related Experience</i>	<i>Spanish Teacher</i> , October 2014 – Present Hamilton County Public Schools, Chattanooga, Tennessee <i>Assistant Professor of Spanish</i> , July 2003 – June 2014 Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia Advised students academically and vocationally Led mission trips to Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Spain, Belgium, Latvia, Clarkston, Georgia and Yakama, Washington <i>Conference Chair, International Event Hosted at Covenant College, North American Christian Foreign Language Association</i> , March 2013
<i>Professional Presentations</i>	<i>Seeing Inside The Sea Inside: Teaching about Suicide through the Spanish film Mar Adentro</i> . Honolulu, Hawaii. January 2013 <i>Death with Dignity or Simply the Sin of Suicide?</i> , Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas. April 2011 : <i>Fostering Spiritual Development Through Entering Unamuno's “San Manuel Bueno, Mártir.”</i> with Anna Wiersema, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, California. March 2009